

Ω Eckhart Tolle Compilation of Daily Motion video clips

[Speaker 1] (0:57 - 1:42:39)

Welcome, I believe we are waiting for the workshop on the now. I would also like to welcome people who are with us in other places, in Toronto, Lenox, Massachusetts, Fort Lauderdale, and even Ireland. And Galway and Ireland.

In all those places, it's later than it is here. So you are in the future and we are in the now. And since you are in the future, you can tell us, if you could, what it's like to be in the future.

Because so far, I haven't met anybody who's ever experienced it. I haven't met anybody who's ever experienced anything that is not now, ever. And even if you had a time traveler, if there is such a thing, if you traveled into the past and then came back, and then I asked you how you experienced that past, you would have to say, well, to me, it was the now.

And even if you were a time traveler from the future and came back here from the future to become governor of California, you would have to say, well, there, it's also now. Now, this is something that one cannot really argue with, the fact that life is always now, that your life always has been and always will be now. And yet, on the other hand, time seems to be such an enormous force in one's life, such an overpowering thing that absorbs most people's attention almost completely.

And if you look at it, it seems that time cannot be denied. There must be something that we call time because it's everywhere. You can test it, buy a fresh apple and put it on a window sill.

It's fresh, it's alive, full of life, shiny. And you come back two months later and look at it, and it's soft, it's shrunk, it's shrively, and you can't even eat it anymore. What happened?

It's time. Any event in your life, how fleeting it all is. If you look at your past, the last vacation you had, gone up in smoke, this morning's breakfast, while it may still be in your stomach, but the experience of it has already receded.

And when, not long ago, I met some friends I hadn't seen in a very, very long time, 25 years or so. And when I first saw them, I got a shock, and maybe they got a shock when they saw me. I don't know.

But my first impression was that they were ill. And then I realized, no, 25 years had passed. And the woman who was last, 55 or so when I saw her, was now 75 or more, I don't know.

The shock, what happened to you? Then I realized it was time. What has time done to you?

It burns you up, or it dries you out. We can look at it from any perspective you like. And then you reach the end of your life, and even the memories, the memory traces in the mind, my life, was that ever, it still seemed like a dream.

It's gone. Even this gathering here, lasts until later this afternoon. Five o'clock or so.

Then you'll be gone, it'll be over, has dissolved. Only exists as a memory that you remember now. If you remember it, you'll have to remember it in the now.

So wherever we look, time seems to be dissolving things. Imagine this room, imagine yourself as a disembodied field of awareness in this room, observing a speeded up version of this room. Like the films that you have seen when you see a flower coming out of the soil, the bud opening all within one minute, and wilting.

Now, if you were a disembodied intelligence in this room, observing what happens to this room, let's say it were condensed, the elapsing time were condensed, by every minute, 500 years. And you're here watching, it would be the most dreadful shock of your life, because the first thing you would see is bodies in this room dissolving one after another. They would dissolve, last few bones left and then dust.

So you would be sitting here, and everywhere people would be popping out of existence. And then the material things would take a little longer, but there too, the wooden things eventually become dust and crumble, even the walls. And then it gets speeded up even more, you can see it all returning into nothingness out of which it came.

Is that a frightening thing? From one perspective, it is. There's also a strangely peaceful thing that comes over you when you contemplate how impermanent all forms are.

So your life, if we speak in terms of time, has a past and a future, your life situation. We can look on it as if you have these ancient scrolls that you unroll, and then let's say on the left, you have writing and images, that's your past, your past situation. On the right, you have writing and images that is your future.

And that becomes, the further you go, more and more illegible, you can't quite figure it out. And at some point, there's your date of death, but that's illegible too. So most people walk around with a sense of self, a sense of existence that is very wide, that is my past, my future, their life situation.

And to most people, their life situation gives them their sense of identity. Those are the circumstances of your life, what the past, what you experienced, learned in the past, what happened to you in the past, what people did to you, what you did to other people, how you interacted with the world. And then the continuation of that, the future, which is

to most people, very, very important.

So time seems to be very overwhelming and one cannot deny on one level its existence. And yet now comes the strange, indisputable fact that all you ever experience is the present moment. So on the one hand, time seems to be an enormous power.

And yet on the other hand, if you pay close attention, you realize that your life is always no more and no less than this moment. From the point of view of time, this moment doesn't even exist because it's only the transition from past into future. So we are here to explore more fully that dimension in you that we call the now.

So as we are here, we are temporarily folding back the scroll of your past and your future, your life situation until what remains is just this moment. And what we'll do is we go more deeply into this dimension here. When you leave here, you can pick up the scroll and unroll it again.

But hopefully, you will realize the power that lies concealed in that central part of your life that to most people is peripheral. When you realize nothing in your life can happen, nothing you can experience, nothing, think nothing, feel nothing, do nothing that is not at this moment. And most people live as if this moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome.

And this moment is life. This moment conceals the fullness of life. The only place where life can be found is now.

And to most people, it's an obstacle. That's a deep-seated mental habit that we all inherit collectively. They are more interested in some other moment, the next one or the one after that.

They treat this moment as a means to an end. I really want to get to that moment. Most of their lives, they live like that.

And that is a dysfunctional way to live because you miss your entire life. You miss the dimension of depth in your life. And all you have, you're floating around on the surface of things.

At first sight, this moment is not interesting in many cases to the human mind, which is used to pass in future. So to realize the aliveness of this moment, it helps greatly. I'm telling you this now because this is essential so that you can endure sitting here for several hours without feeling that you cannot stand this now anymore.

If you cannot stand this now anymore, that means you cannot stand yourself anymore. You need to escape into some world of make-believe in the mind. So how to be here and stay anchored in here and explore the vertical dimension of your life because you've been concerned about the horizontal for a whole lifetime.

My life situation, these things that happened to me didn't quite, that worked out, that didn't work out. But no life situation, anybody's life situation here has worked itself out to their complete satisfaction. Every life situation has a dilemma in it.

Every life situation is problematic. Every life situation is as yet unresolved. There are lots of loose ends, things that should have gone differently but didn't.

The story is not totally satisfying ever of me. The story of me, it's a life situation that exists in time. But the story of me, of course, still has a future.

To think one day I can complete the story of me and one day I will feel completely and fully myself. I will have arrived at that sense of being totally rooted, that sense of total security and peace and aliveness, be fully myself. One day, the story of me will reach that point where I can say, that's it, it's complete, I have arrived.

And then I will be myself. But I'm not fully myself yet. Almost everybody feels that.

And if you make the mistake of picking up a gossip magazine with lots of photos, you can see the images of people who the publishers pretend have made it. Their stories are complete. They live in a mansion.

They look glamorous. But then you just wait for the next edition when you see that they are on drugs, they're continuously getting divorced and married with all the suffering that comes. Their life is in shambles too.

It hasn't, the story hasn't quite completed itself. And on that level, it never really will. On the level of your life situation or on the level of time, there's always a sense of incompleteness.

If you derive your sense of self from the story of me, there will always be some sense of incompleteness. I'm not yet fully me. 500 years later, if it could prolong your life, I need another 500 years.

Just give me a little bit more time. And if this were a seminar where I could give you steps how to achieve at the state of inner connectedness, the state of, that is also the state of peace, in 14 easy steps that only take as many years, you would probably feel satisfied because you could take something home with you and feel he has given us time. That feels good.

Now, from one level, sitting here is unsatisfying because our gathering works on a different level. Nothing is being given to you, not even food for thought, ultimately. So how does it work?

What is the point in sitting here? Sitting here works on three levels. One is something is being pointed out here.

You're given little pointers so that you can look at something that before you had taken completely for granted in your life and question that and see that ultimately there is a dysfunction here. Before you can see that something is dysfunctional or even insane, I call normal insane, normal human consciousness has a strong streak of insanity to it. If anybody doesn't believe this, go and buy a book on history, human history, 20th century's best because it's the most insane of all.

When humans killed 100 million or so of their own species in one century alone. But all the centuries are pretty mad. Just you can't see it in such magnitude.

The madness has now become magnified and perhaps it's also accelerating. Yes, there is a strong element of dysfunction in the human mind and we are addressing that here. You will see how that can be recognized in the collective energy field, consciousness of the planet, of humanity, of history and primarily in yourself, in your own life because the collective is only a reflection of the individuals.

And when you see a pattern in yourself, for example, that you are never present in the only place and the only time where life is, here and now, that are very rarely present in the here and now, when you see that, become conscious of that, to some extent, you're already stepping out. You have one foot out of that dysfunction when you see it. The person who knows that they are mad, that person is not completely mad anymore because the seeing of a dysfunctional pattern in oneself is not part of the dysfunctional pattern.

So as we speak, it seems that part of the time, what we are pointing to is the so-called bad news, the bad news of human dysfunction. But it is good to see that because you become, in the seeing of it, you become free. It is the first step to freedom, one step out.

If you have seen the film, A Beautiful Mind, you will see that there's a person here who is totally identified with his highly high-powered mind. And at some point in the film, you realize that his reality, to a large extent, is delusional. The viewer realizes that the reality of this scientist is delusional the moment that he also realizes that his reality, to a large extent, that he has delusions, delusion.

And that is the moment when he begins to become healed because when he realizes delusion, recognizes delusion as delusion, something has arisen that is not part of the delusion, awareness, presence. Ah, so it's good to point out certain dysfunctions that you can then see in yourself. Nothing personal in that.

That's one level on which this gathering works. The other level is giving you little pointers to show you how you can exit the dysfunctional state of consciousness. Or to look at it from another perspective, portals into a different state of consciousness.

That's the other level at which this gathering works. And the third level at which this

gathering works is not to do with words or thoughts or concepts. It is to do with, this is hard to put into words because it's not to do with words, becoming attuned to an energy field that is here in this gathering that has nothing to do with the words and yet out of which the words come.

The energy field of presence. And even if you went to sleep occasionally, that would still be working. It would seep in.

And for those of you, there may be some who got dragged here by a friend and cannot stand staying here the whole afternoon, I will give you something now that perhaps one day you will find extremely helpful when the time comes and suffering arises and you become ready for this transformation. And this is also for everybody else here, for the rest of this gathering, I will be reminding you throughout, we come now to the first exit point out of the time-bound state of consciousness. As you sit here, make sure that you are not you can sense, even if it's only in the background, the aliveness that is in your body because your body undoubtedly is alive.

But most people have no feeling of connectedness with the aliveness that is in every cell and in every organ of their body and not a lust aliveness, the intelligence that underlies the entire functioning of the body. They live in the upper compartment here, they occupy this building, but they live in the loft. And in the loft, they run around from one corner to another, like a little mouse, very busy up there and saying, I'm so restless, I don't know what to do next, what's the next thing that I can need to do, what's next?

No, next is always when you identify it with the time-bound mind-identified consciousness, the next thing is always more important than this. So what's the next thing I have to do? And then you have a whole industry to satisfy your greed for the next thing, the mind's greed, more stimulus, switch this on, that, switch that.

And so that state of unease is quite normal. And then illnesses come very quickly because you're not here. So it is a dreadful fate to be trapped up here in the continuous stream of thinking that is the human mind, 98% of which is totally repetitive, doesn't get you anywhere whatsoever, in fact, gets you into a lot of trouble.

2% you need, maybe 10%, but all the thinking that goes on that most people are totally identified with as who they are, one thought arises, the next thought arises, the next thought arises, oh, I'm so worried about that, I don't know what's going to happen. Of course you don't know what's going to happen. I need to know, and then it goes, it always functions through past and future.

So you have this enormous weight that you carry. On your left, you have your past, on the right, you have your future, both are enormous burdens because the past is also not all that great. Sometimes you try to convince yourself, and the future is very problematic.

It has two faces, hope and fear. Maybe things will get better. Maybe I will find myself somewhere there.

But on the other hand, deep down, everybody knows that eventually things will not get better because no matter how long they get better for, a point will come where they get worse on the level of form they must do because it is the destiny of forms to dissolve. So even you build up an empire, and it's just a question of which one goes first, you or the empire. It is in the nature of forms not to last.

And so if you derive your sense of self from this that you carry around as me, it is a place of continuous fear and unease, hope, fear, and unease of not enough, of insufficiency. And so you walk around life with this burden of me, this uneasiness, trying to, I'm not full yet. What does, I'm not yet, I need more, try a little bit more of this to complete my sense of self.

Buy that. All advertisers know that your sense of self is not complete yet. And what they want to do to make you feel even more incomplete.

And so you buy their product, and for a moment you can add the mental image of this product to who you think you are, because it's yours now. My such and such car, house, dress, shoes. So you've added a object, mental object, to who I am, it's mine.

For a moment it completes you, it doesn't last long. Sometimes it's only the act of shopping that completes you. The adding something to me, and then you get home and you look at it, and it still feels good, and then you put it in your wardrobe and five years later you discover it's still there.

It was only the act of adding that was important. So people look for things to add, this is why the future is so important, because your sense of self is derived from a mind-made accumulation of images and thoughts about who you are. So you need, it's always not enough, so everyone is on the lookout for more, that's why they desperately need the future, because the future will give them the more they believe.

And it does, but it doesn't complete them, never for long. Fame, wanted fame, and most people think if fame and fortune come, then surely I will have made it. Now, if you look at all the famous people, they're just as unhappy as everybody else.

Some are more unhappy, except for a few who have looked through fame and fortune and seen that's not who I am, and they've gone deeper. Sometimes you have to find, get everything that you thought you needed and still not feel complete, and then you realize that that is not where you find your identity, your true self, and that is not where you find the lasting peace that is part of who you are in your essence. There's nothing wrong with adding things, experiences, knowledge, expertise, even possessions, but if it is a search for an identity, if there is a me invested in that, then that also is a form of

suffering, because you never get there.

So, the need for more is overpowering in human beings, because they are looking for themselves. The need for more could even be here, with the need to be fed more concepts, but you're not given many here. So there's a feeling of I'm not being given what I want or need.

No, of course not, because to find yourself, nothing ultimately needs to be added. The adding to works well on the level of your life situation. There you can play around with learning new things.

It's fine to do, explore new countries, buy this or that, and it's like this is beautiful. Without looking for yourself in it, that's beautiful. So on that level, yes, adding to yourself is fine, exploring new things, but if you're looking for some permanent satisfaction, peace in that, it cannot be found there.

If you're looking for yourself, you won't find yourself there. It will always be that, hmm, what now? So we realize here that to be who you are in your essence, which has nothing to do with the story of me, you do not need more of anything.

You mean I'm enough already? This can't be. Look at the mess I'm in, my life situation.

Look at my debts or whatever. Look at my investments, they've all plunged. Look at this, look at that.

It can't be. Well, you're asking me then to look at your life situation. What about your life?

Life, what life? Here, now, can you feel the life that you are? Can you feel the aliveness?

This is one entry point in the inner body. Or do you only dwell up there in your head? If you do, you will notice as you sit here, you get more and more restless.

If you're only up here because you cannot be only up here and absorb what is being said here. So you become more restless and begin to twitch without even knowing it because you're not in the body. And then you look at your watch, time, time.

What's the time? How much longer? What's next?

Where do I have to be at five? The exit out of the mind-identified consciousness that is the continuous stream of thinking, very powerful exit point is to direct attention into the inner body. And for those of you who cannot feel that the body is alive in the background as a subtle sense of aliveness, a little thing that can help you is hold up your left or right hand, close your eyes and ask yourself if there's any way you can know whether that hand is still there or not.

I tell this to people who tell me I cannot feel anything. Okay, then let's see if this is true that you cannot feel anything. Close your eyes.

Is your right or left hand still there? Now, sometimes people are just in their minds. They say, yes, it's still there because I saw it there a minute ago.

But that's not it. Can you feel that it's still there? Yes, of course you can.

You have to direct attention at that moment away from thinking and the attention flows into the hand. Of course it's there. I can feel it.

And if you hold the other hand, it becomes easier to feel that also. And you can then realize that you can actually bring together the feeling of two hands into a single feeling of hand, hand. And then can you feel your feet in the same way?

Do they almost start tingling? I don't want to make any suggestions, but that is what one feels. There is intense aliveness throughout the body.

Can you now enter, if you have found one entry point into the body, like your hands, it becomes easier to begin to feel the other parts of the body, not perhaps as strongly as hand. And then to feel the entire energy field of body as a single feeling, sensing in the background as you sit here. So some of your attention is out on the words, auditory perception, and some of your attention is in the inner aliveness that you feel.

You are now becoming present. You are now rooted, becoming rooted in yourself, in your very being. Instead of living in the stream of thinking that is totally conditioned by the past, out of which nothing new ever comes.

It's a circle. It goes round and round. That's why in ancient cultures, they talk of the vicious circle of existence.

It's a very concrete thing. Stepping out of that, you do not become stupid. To be identified with that is stupidity.

No matter how much knowledge you have accumulated, if you are identified, which means every thought draws in your attention completely, that is stupid, no matter how knowledgeable you are. And you will put it to stupid ends. You will put your intelligence to stupid ends.

This is what the whole world does. Look what it does with the great inventions. Splitting the atom requires intelligence.

Building an atom bomb is stupidity. Building a chainsaw requires great intelligence. Cutting down all the ancient forests with it requires great stupidity.

If you cannot get out of that conditioned thoughts, stream of thinking, you remain

ultimately stupid, dysfunctional. There's enormous intelligence that lives inside your body. Far greater than the human mind could ever even understand, let alone imitate.

How could the human mind run all the thousands of functions and coordinate them of the body? Every cell embodies intelligence. The one consciousness taking temporary form as that cell, as that organ.

So people see, how do I contact the greater intelligence? How do I find God? And then they look, they think, okay, if I have to work hard, and then at some point in the future, perhaps I will find himself, herself, myself, however they conceive it.

But that's not where it is. The entry point into the greater intelligence that is beyond the human mind, that is, pervades the entire universe that expresses itself here as this beautiful flower, takes form as that, unproblematic. The flower has no problems.

It doesn't, I wonder what's going to happen to me tomorrow. It is there in all its beauty, an unproblematic full expression of that. So this, the same intelligence dwells here.

You can contact it. There's a saying in the, I believe it's the Koran or an associated book, God is closer to you than your jugular vein. And another saying, God is closer to you than hands and feet.

God is closer to you than hands and feet. Now, how is that possible? Because hands and feet are so close.

What can be even closer than hands and feet? The inner of that. So if you can sit here and dwell, be rooted in your inner energy field, at the same time, you have exited the continuous stream of thinking to a large extent because you can either have your consciousness being consumed by thinking or you can have your consciousness in here, in the body.

So most people's lives are consumed by their mind. It burns up their life energy uselessly. You lie in bed, you worry, you travel to work, you worry, you think, should, shouldn't have, what if, and so on, all going around in circles.

If you could exit even for a few minutes, and find stillness, because that is the entry point into inner stillness, when you leave identification with a conditioned mind. Now, the conditioned mind will tell you, don't go there because you won't know what's going on anymore. You will lose your mind.

Not true. It is only if you are connected with that, that you can use your mind in a fresh, creative and constructive way. So if you can sit here and feel, yes, I am alive, feel it in the background, so to speak, and at the same time, you can listen.

There is an aliveness here. You're getting closer to who you are than you ever are when

you're identified with the story of me. You are stepping out of the story to deriving your sense of self from telling yourself, dwelling mentally, continuously on your life situation, which exists in time.

Not in the now. I'm not denying the existence of time on its own level, or the existence of your life situation, but there is something more powerful that people haven't discovered yet. It's the only place where the new, where true power can come into your life.

You have to access this tiny thing that to the mind doesn't even exist now. And the inner body is a powerful anchor for accessing now. You then realize you can sit here without needing to interpret this moment in any way.

It is as it is. Because otherwise, interpretation of what happens to you throughout life is compulsive when you're identified with a compulsive thinking mind. Any situation you go into, you will immediately label it out of your past experience.

Any person you meet, you will immediately label according to your past conditioning. So you go through life carrying a screen of conceptualization, which is your thought processes and emotions associated with your thought processes. Wherever you go, you judge immediately, compulsively.

That's how it is. Immediately you say, this is how it is. That's, some people do it more than others.

So you are surrounded by that screen, inhabiting a conceptualized reality, which is all conditioned by the past. And then you put labels, mental labels, which are concepts onto other people. You formulate concepts about who they are.

You take a tiny segment out of their behavior, which is another form of conditioning, which comes out of them, and then say, this is who he is, this is who she is. That's what it does. Or you do it to a group of people.

That's, you conceptualize a group of people, call them this or that. Immediately, you cannot sense their aliveness anymore. You cannot sense that here is a feeling, alive, divine, ultimately human being.

You cannot sense that anymore. All you can see is your concept of that human being or that group of people. This is how a person can commit acts of great violence against a group of people that they have conceptualized in the head, made already lifeless, so to speak.

And then, these are not humans anymore. You can put a bomb there. You're killing, you've killed them already in your mind.

You've conceptualized them already. That's how you can see how, what on a personal

level is simply a screen that makes your life heavy and difficult, that imposes stories on everything that happens to you. On a collective level, it lies also at the root of the dysfunction, the collective dysfunction in humanity.

What are we doing to ourselves and to others? So where the root then is to be identified with the conditioned thinking. The solution is to step out of conditioned thinking.

And the mind says, oh, you can't possibly do that. Who is talking? Conditioned thinking.

Feeling the body? No, you can't. I can't feel the body right now because I've got too much on my mind.

Who is talking? The mind. So the mind will tell you also when you lie awake in bed, you need to think about this now.

If you don't think about this now, it will all collapse. It's four o'clock in the morning. There's nothing you can do.

You are tortured by your own mind. The body believes that every thought that you have is a reality. Every fearful thought that you have, that you're actually in some fearful situation.

So the body is continuously contracted. If it's, oh no, dreadful things are happening right now. Your energy field gets disrupted.

Energy doesn't flow freely anymore. And then do that for a few years. What that does to your body.

Oh, this goes wrong here, that goes wrong there. Nothing is flowing anymore. So there you are in bed.

Something in the head is telling you that you need to think about this now. No, I don't. There's no action I can take at this moment.

I've thought about it already for 20 hours. And it is my choice at this moment not to think. It is my choice to feel the aliveness that I am.

And then the mind says, no, you can't do that now. Can you identify the thinker and not confuse the thinker with who you are? If you are not the thinker, who are you?

Or rather, the thinker asks, well, if I'm not the thinker, who am I? When you realize that there's a stream of thinking going through your head, you take one step back internally from the thinking. And when you're in the body, that's easier, of course.

Just take one step back and there are the thoughts. And you can choose at that moment that you do not want to think. What for?

What for? Many situations in life would be far more beautiful if you were not imposing interpretations on them, especially relationships. We may come to that.

But at the moment, we are in bed at four o'clock in the morning. So the mind will usually tell you, sometimes it says, I have no time to go into the body. No time, I have too much to think about.

It's a lie. But you have to see it as a lie. It is.

You have to recognize it is a conditioned mind pattern. The mind doesn't want you to go into the body. And then you go into the body, you've stepped out.

You realize more, once you're in the body, you realize a dimension of yourself that is not the stream of thinking. An aliveness. I am that aliveness.

That is a thought, but I'm translating into the thought what is ultimately, when you sense it, it's not a thought. You feel alive. Before, you did not feel alive.

Humans that go through the world with that conceptualized reality are not truly, they do not truly feel alive. They need a substitute life. They need continuous stimulus to give them a feeling of that they're still a little bit alive.

They need drama in relationships just to have that excitement to feel, yes, I'm still alive, we're fighting. The relationship must still be real. Children at an early age, children, very young children are connected with the aliveness that they are until concepts come into the head.

And in this modern civilization, they very quickly get out of their body. And the moment, especially, they start using the mass-produced screen, electronic screen gadgets, they are totally in the world of concepts and stimulus, mental stimulus, and become addicted to that to feel alive. They can't feel the life that they are anymore.

They cannot live without stimulus anymore. It's a mad world. The most beautiful thing in life, the delight of life, the delight of being, that plants can feel, although we cannot get into plants in that way.

With animals, we can see it a little bit more. When you watch a bird that sings, that flies from one branch to another, when you watch an eagle in flight for an hour without moving the wings, any animal, a cat purring, they're delighting in being alive. And I'm sure this flower delights in being alive in its own way, not quite, not the same consciousness as the human.

Basically, yes, the same one consciousness, but a different expression of that. But somehow everything natural is still connected with the delight of being. It is rooted in being.

And so we see millions and millions of humans living in a pseudo-reality with a sense of self that is ultimately a fiction that is always insufficient, always feeling a sense of lack, always needing more, always even needing to make enemies so that it can still define itself as me and the other, needing some kind of conflict so that its separate sense of self can remain intact. What can I be in conflict with today? What can I complain about now so that I can feel a little bit more myself?

Ah, there it is. And so when millions of humans live like that, then the result is what we read as human history, a dreadful tale of incredible suffering that humans inflict on each other and other life forms on the planet. Incredible suffering.

And so the same you see on television tonight. When you switch on the news, you will see just how mad the collective consciousness is of humanity in its present evolutionary stage. And yet here we are.

Here we are and we recognize that all that is a form of, one could say, collective mental illness that humanity is suffering from. And so one could say, well, how can God allow a whole species to become mentally ill? I heard that question somewhere in somebody's mind.

And of course, you can ask the same question on a personal level. How can, does God allow me to be ill? How dare he, she, it to allow me to be ill, to suffer?

And of course, within the larger whole, everything has its own nature. It takes place and everything is as it should, including your personal illness for the moment. Doesn't mean healing cannot happen.

But there are many humans here who were brought here, who would not be here if they had not suffered some kind of dysfunction in their lives, physical illness perhaps. Or some great loss. And so you can already see on your personal level that your suffering, your physical suffering, whatever it may be, to some extent began to dissolve the egoic structures in your mind.

It started to shake it loose so that something else could come through. And you suddenly found yourself becoming interested in the present moment. And then you end up here.

And no matter what your story is, and some of you may feel that it was all one big mistake, the story of me was all one big mistake. You are here now. And that's an amazing thing to be, to be here now and see that was the story.

And the outcome of all that big mistake was that now you are stepping out of it and you realize it as, yes, on the level of form, this is how my life unfolded. And now let me speak personally for one moment. I could easily look upon my whole life, let's say until the world told me that I was important a few years ago, it happened.

Before that, nobody told me I was important. Until that, I could look at my whole life up to that point as one complete disaster. Nothing actually worked out.

I tried that for a few years, and then I was at university, and then I did my PhD, and then I gave that up, and then I drifted for two years, and then I went into that, and then I tried that, and it didn't, things, many things. Okay, and then my mother said, okay, now you're 45, what have you achieved? Others have already built up big businesses.

And so on the level of story, it was a big disaster. And yet, fortunately, at some point already, I had given up identification with the story, that the story was only my identity up to the age of 29, and it was a very unhappy one even there. Even when I was, that was my relatively successful, the only lively success I had was I did well at university up to before I became a graduate student.

And it made me happy for two weeks. And so, how, isn't it strange that a failed story can produce the flower, the flower of consciousness? And perhaps the flower of consciousness needs the mud out of which it grows.

You have the beautiful image of the lotus in Buddhism, the symbol of Buddhism, the lotus flower, it grows, it has its roots in the mud, and it grows out of that. And there's nothing more beautiful in human life than a failed story. Ah.

And the good news is, every story ultimately fails because the forms, because the story is based on the forms, it identifies with forms, and no forms last for that long. No building lasts for that long, eventually it crumbles. All forms are temporary and they are beautiful.

The essence that is hiding in each form is the formless one life that is indestructible. But even this beautiful form, finchon, it is not eternal as a form, but the eternal shines through the forms here. That is why, because the forms are transparent and you also are not eternal as this form, and yet a transparency is happening in you even as you sit here, so that that which is beyond form, no matter what we call it, stillness, presence, beingness, a deep sense of I am that before got mixed up with the story of me, and that the preciousness of being is your true specialness.

What the egoic self had been looking for on the level of the story, I want to be special, that very thought obscured the fact that you already could not be more special than you are now, but not special in the egoic sense that more than he or more than she, special in the sense that there is a beauty and preciousness that is the essence of your being, and that is what deep down you can sense, even the person who is most completely identified with their story and their conceptual sense of self, they feel that there's somewhere there's something precious that is me, but they confuse it with the forms, thought forms, it gets that essence of being which is formless and timeless gets mixed up with form, with thought and a story in the head, and that is what the Buddha calls the

fictitious self, the self that the Buddha even 2,600 years ago recognized as an illusion, an enormous insight, the greatest, perhaps the greatest insight of all humanity when he recognized the self is an illusion, and by that he means the self that is identified with any form, thought form, physical form, anything, and that is the illusion, to lose oneself in some form, and then the preciousness of being that is the essence that is timeless and formless in every human and in every life form, one could say incarnates in form, and there's nothing wrong with incarnating in form as long as you know yourself as that which is beyond form, but if you lose yourself in the incarnation, and ultimately you had to do that too, that was part of the totality of how things work, to lose oneself is, as the Buddha called it, suffering, then you suffer because you don't know who you are anymore, you're looking for yourself in some form, in some thought form, in some physical form that you identify with which is then also a thought form, me, and so everybody's looking for the essence of their being, not knowing that the specialness that they look for is already the essence of who they are, but they can only find it when they stop looking for themselves in the future through more, so the one place, it's all like some strange game, the one place where you truly can only find yourself in that one place most humans never look, which is the present moment, they look there for themselves, and to feel, I want to be more, on the level of form, you can temporarily be more, that's true, and then that dissolves again, but there is a level within yourself where more does not operate, you do not need to be more, for you are already a full expression of the one life, you are already complete on the level of the timeless, the essence of your being, now the only reason why you needed time was you needed to be ready to hear this truth and recognize it as a truth, and you need time for this, for that one could say you need time, to hear the message that to be who you are, you don't need time, but the paradox is, there are still many humans to whom this would be meaningless, and they don't come here, they need, in other words, they need more time, they need to continue to look for themselves, and they need to continue to be frustrated in their search, that is part of the larger design, the frustration is built into human existence, and so that's what the world is for, the so-called world, it is there to frustrate you, and to drive you deeper, to eventually drive you out of identification with form, because as long as you're identified with form, it is so frustrating, and you can never make it, you can never arrange the forms and accumulate all the forms that you need, you think you need to be yourself, or sometimes you can do it for a very brief time span, you can suddenly find everything is now working in my life, my health is good, my relationship is great, great money, got possessions, everybody loves me, they all write good things about me, it's all working, my job, my living situation, my finances, my health, my relationships, they're all great, but before long, something there starts to crumble here and there, it's either the finances, or it's the relationship, or it's the living situation, it's in the nature of the world of form, that nothing stays fixed for very long, and so it starts to crumble again here, you just had sorted it all out, and so that's why humans, they experience life as a series of frustrations, why can't it work? It doesn't work because they are looking for themselves there, they are demanding that the world

of form should make them complete and happy, I demand that this world should complete who I am, should give me my sense of self, I just need this and that from there, and then that's all, this is what I demand, and then it's not happening, there's something wrong here, life isn't working, it seems to be working for everybody else, but it's not working for me, I read in the magazines, all these glossy people, it seems to be working for them, but only if you look at the glossy pictures, if you visited them at home, you would see that it's not working for them either, so it's built into living here is frustration, it's meant to be frustrating, this is the larger, the whole, there is a purpose, but people haven't seen it, so it's quite a relief to recognize, first of all, the world cannot make me happy, to demand that situations, people, places, or attainments should complete me or make me happy are bound to be frustrated, whether I attain or do not attain.

Okay, so that looks very negative, doesn't it? That's, and that's why when you don't go deeper, when you only see the surface, you see, oh, all is vanity, as the Old Testament prophet said, vanity of vanities, all is vanity, I've seen it all, I can't remember the exact words, but I'm giving you a free translation, I've seen it all, I've done it all, and it's all completely meaningless, is what he said. And that was probably an elderly man who had tried it all.

And now, why did they put this into the Bible? Isn't it very negative to have such a statement that life is completely vain, whatever you can achieve is vanity? They put that in there because when you see the truth of it, you're already becoming free of it.

The seeing of the inability of the world to make you happy, the seeing of the short-lived nature of whatever forms you encounter in your life, what is it in you that is able to see that and say, ah, or even laugh? What before was a dreadful story and frustration, you suddenly step out of your own story and see that your own frustrating story is not your personal dilemma, but the human condition. And you derived your sense of self from that, which is nothing personal whatsoever, it's the human condition.

And it's the human condition in its unconscious state, its unenlightened state. And that's what gave you your sense of personal selfhood and that you wanted to cling to. And now you step out of it by simply seeing it.

The seeing means something is arising that is not part of that unconsciousness. And that is why they put it into the Bible, because when you see it, that which can witness that in you, the impermanent nature of all forms, the fictitious nature of the mind-made story, what is it in you that is able to look at that and see, ah, that is not thought, that is the ability to be aware and hold up the mirror of awareness and simply see it's there. Or let's say better, the light of awareness shines on it.

The light of awareness shines on it and sees what before you were trapped in, the frustrating story of my life. And there's no life that's not ultimately frustrating. It only begins, it loses its frustration when you do not look to the world anymore for your

satisfaction.

Or for yourself. When you give up demanding that people, places, situations should make you happy and fulfill you, you don't demand it anymore, then suddenly the ability arises to allow the forms of this moment to be as they are. Because life at this moment already, always is as it is.

Everybody, every human being in life form is an expression of that one formless and timeless one life. And that is beyond anything that could be destroyed. It's life itself.

It has no opposite. The one life has not, death is not the opposite of life. Death is the opposite of birth.

And birth and death apply to the forms that appear on the surface of the sphere. So when death happens to life forms, even violent death, yes, it is from the perspective of the surface reality is dreadful. But from the perspective of knowing the transcendent dimension, even that is no longer dreadful.

It is transcended because the realization is there. The life that you are and the life that I am can never be destroyed. The essence of every life form is eternal.

It derives from the one. It's an expression of the one. To know that, not just as a belief, but deep within yourself to know that which cannot be destroyed, what the Buddhists call amara, the deathless.

This is the closest perhaps that the Buddhists come to talking about God. The deathless dimension, timeless, deathless, that which cannot be destroyed. Every human and every life form is a temporary expression of that.

When you know that within yourself, you look with deep compassion upon the madness that happens on the surface reality, perpetrated by humans who don't know who they are. And because they don't know who they are, they don't know what they are doing to themselves, ultimately, because every other is yourself. So it's not, the process is not to emphasize more and more the form of the me and the form, and as God continues to build me, he is building me up.

That could be the idea. God is building me up. God, of course, you can replace with universal intelligence, the universe, whatever you want to, whatever term you want to use.

And yet I know from inner realization that it's not really how it works. It's becoming diminished as a person, and then something else shines through that has nothing to do with the form of the person. But the form of the person was necessary, like the seed has to break open, and that was necessary, but the seed does not find its purpose, the purpose for its existence is not to become a better seed, or to look better as a seed, but

to break open and no longer being a seed.

And then these amazing things come out of the tiniest seeds. In a botanical garden, I bought in a little, they were selling a little paper bag seeds for trees, and then I planted some in pots, and I bought, there were probably 80 or 100 tiniest seeds. You can hardly see the single seeds, and they became, it said this is the sequoia tree or something like that, and it becomes a gigantic, it can live for 2,000 years.

It comes out of something you can hardly see. But if the seed had a self-image of being a seed and were persistent in remaining a seed and stubborn and insisting, no, I'm seed, and I want to be a better seed, then it wouldn't happen, the whole miracle would not unfold. And there may be seeds who refuse to give way and break open.

The universal curriculum, every teaching is a form of that universal curriculum, but the essence of the universal curriculum is to reach the formless within yourself, which is where you and God merge, where you and the source of all life merge, where the little me realizes its true reality, where the little ripple realizes that it is the ocean. It continues to be a ripple for a little while, but if the ripple, and this is a dark book taken from the course in the text, if the ripple in the ocean thinks of itself as separate, imagine that, the ripple on the ocean, the world becomes very threatening because the vastness, I'm just, who am I on this little short-lived thing, on this vastness, and all the other ripples are my enemies, what do they want? And the waves.

And if the ripple could realize by going within, I am the ocean, temporarily appearing as a ripple. Oh, that's great. Of course, I'm not going to last that long not here as a ripple, but I'm eternal as the ocean.

What a liberation. Another analogy apart from the ripple, of course, gives the analogy of the ray of sunlight. And if the little ray forgets that it is actually part of the sun, because the light that comes to you from the sun is actually, it's an extension of the sun.

But if the ray forgets that it is an extension of the sun and says, it's little me, doesn't know where it comes from, it doesn't know its source, it just looks around at other rays and says, who are you? I don't like the way you look. But if the ray could find its source, oh, then you can enjoy all the other rays because they're all the same source.

And then you can look at another ray through the source. So you go in, and then instead of looking at the other from out here, you look at the other from the point of view of the source, and you realize the oneness. So you go, you don't look like that, that's two, me and you, you go there where we are both come from the same source, and you look from there and see, oh, we look like two, but we're actually one.

That's the realization of oneness, the greatest liberation there is. And really, that's, again, what any spiritual teaching is designed to do for you, is to take you to that

realization of oneness, which has nothing to do with thinking. Thinking creates duality.

You have to go beyond thinking to realize oneness. So they react to your reaction, and you create a whole train of reactivity, and this is how the drama develops and grows. And it's all taken for absolutely real, and that's how it is.

You don't realize, the entity doesn't realize, it's creating the whole story. Something is still missing in my life. Something is still not right.

And then you try other relationships, and you try other places to live, and you try other activities, and sooner or later, and usually sooner, you come again to the place. This isn't right either. And then you ask, what am I really meant to do?

Where am I really meant to be? Because it's not here. It's never here, ultimately, because you're not at home deep enough in the now, so you can never feel, this is never it.

But there's no external solution to that. There's only an inner solution to that. You come home to the now, and so you have to drop down beyond the mental emotional accumulations that you confuse with who you are.

And you sense, as I sometimes say, the ripple on the surface of the Pacific Ocean stops thinking of itself as a ripple and senses its own depths. And suddenly, the ripple feels at one with the depths of the ocean, but also feels at one with every other ripple that it sees on the surface of the ocean, because it senses its connectedness with the totality, with the one, with the ocean, and therefore recognizes every other ripple as also being an expression of that. And then, for the first time, it can become comfortable with other ripples, really at ease.

The ripples, of course, in our analogy, are people. Here, a related question. As I'm awakening, I'm becoming more aware of how often I'm angry and it is getting tiresome.

How do I manage the expectations of myself? Well, it's the, so, you need to manage the expectations and then you need to manage the anger, anger management and expectation management. Expectation means you beat yourself up for being unconscious.

Which is more unconsciousness, because the mental image of who you are says, I'm not good enough, I can't do it. You see, I've been at it for 25 years and I still can't do it. You can't possibly be any good if you still can't do it after 25 years.

Those are thoughts that float around in your mind. And how do you feel? As I suppose that Byron Katie would ask that.

How do you feel when you believe those thoughts? Not good. You're beating yourself up

and you feel an emotion.

Feel bad about myself. More ego, more conceptualized identity in your mind. Concepts in your mind about you, you derive your sense of self from that.

More of the same. So the, well, let's say it's anger, and then you wake up after the anger reaction, say, I did it again, I'm no good. So you have the second egoic reaction to the first one.

Anger is something that comes in in many people very fast. So there may not be, unless there's already considerable presence power in you, there may not be enough presence to catch it. It takes you over before you know it, especially old reaction.

And before you know it, you're talking and shouting and you are not doing it at all. It's the pattern. It's the mind pattern, mental, emotional pattern in you, which often related to what I call the pain body, which is old, accumulated, painful emotion, which could be anger, which could be a deep, depressed sadness.

Anger is a very frequent one. The pain body energy is just waiting in people who have accumulated old anger, going back to childhood, feeling powerless. And what does a child do when the child feels powerless?

It starts dreaming, it's all it can do. And sometimes it works. Sometimes the parents come and say, okay, you can have the sweet if you scream loud enough.

So it's powerlessness is always behind anger. And the ego pretends that there's your power there in anger, but anger arises out of a sense of powerlessness. And there's often fear hiding underneath it.

And when you are there looking at it, then you realize that at firsthand within yourself, there is a sense of powerlessness behind it. And the ego is pretending to be powerful, when really it's in a state of fear. You can see it even with little dogs.

The smallest dogs are the bark the most. And whenever they're little, I've seen little dogs, whenever a big one goes past, they get angry. Arr, arr, arr.

Arr. Arr. Arr.

Because, I mean, if I were that size, I would do that too, probably. Arr. Arr.

Arr. So you are a little Chihuahua, or you're a little sweet little Bichon Frise. And a Mastiff walks past, or a Rottweiler, who looks very quiet, because the Rottweiler knows its own power.

It doesn't need to, it goes. And the little one goes, arr, arr. Arr.

Arr. Arr. Arr.

But with dogs, we smile when we see that, because we somehow recognize that pattern. And we smile. And probably the Rottweiler has an inner smile too, when he walks past.

But with humans, it's more difficult to smile, when they go, arr. And words come streaming out of their mouth. It's more difficult to smile.

And what it's possible, not necessarily, you say, don't necessarily smile, but recognize it for what it is, when you see it in another. Don't equate that with who that person is. Recognize it, that the person has been taken over by that energy field.

And that already is a wonderful thing. That already, we could call, is forgiveness in a wider sense. We don't equate unconscious behavior with who that person is.

If we equate it with who that person is, that is, that's the real meaning of judgment. Judgment is not to say to somebody, I realize that you get angry a lot. And that person then might tell you, are you judging me?

No, it's a fact. If I see that you get angry a lot, that was just a fact, there's no judgment in it. But if I equate that with your essential identity of who you are, you are an angry person, and then I always expect more anger from you, that's a judgment.

Not recognizing a pattern that operates unconsciously through humans and taking that for their identity is judgment. And you can do it to yourself. So you can judge yourself for those things.

And that is just as much ego as judging somebody else. You can beat yourself up and call yourself no good. And whatever else the self talk tells you in your head, it calls you you.

In many people's minds, when the mind talks to you, it says you, see? You are such and such, you see? You can't do it.

Sometimes it says I, it might say I in some people, but in many it says you. Isn't that strange? You talk to yourself in your head.

One part of your mind condemns the other part. When you see it, you can rise above it and there's suddenly an awareness that comes with it. You're no longer trapped in those patterns.

I would recommend particularly to become particularly alert when you know you're getting stressed, something, a situation is building up in some kind of, for example, if you get, anger takes over when you get stressed, could happen. When you feel a stress building up towards it, you can become very alert so that you can, it doesn't take you over. What you know the anger is about to come.

Or if it's, if you know certain areas of your life are more likely to wake you unconscious, sometimes you know just beforehand that those are going to arise in the next minute or so. And then you can be alert, feel the entire energy field in your body, be alert with every cell of your body, then pick up the phone and talk about the financial situation with your investment advisor so that, and treat those as spiritual practices and realize nothing is more important than consciousness, not the situation, it's consciousness. Some people's pain bodies are, consist, as I said, predominantly of anger.

And you can, in some people, you can sense their semi-dormant pain body in the background even when they are not particularly angry right now. But there are people who are waiting for the next opportunity to be angry. That's their pain body.

And sometimes when you are sensitive towards other, you can feel energy fields, you can sometimes sense in other people they are waiting for an excuse to be angry. Some are when you look into their eyes, it's already there, but it's not them. It's that which occupies their inner energy field, which is the pain body.

And so they're waiting, and any excuse, and they will get angry at you or whoever it may be. So you become a grievance looking for a cause.

[Speaker 3] (1:43:04 - 1:43:28)

Thank you for being my spiritual teacher. You've really helped me a lot. You say, in the power of now, that you are here to enable the divine purpose of the universe to unfold.

Could you please explain what the divine purpose of the universe is? Ah. Ah.

Ah. Ah.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:34 - 2:11:39)

The universe wants to awaken consciousness coming into this dimension is the divine purpose. But the divine purpose is twofold. One is the universe delights in creation.

It delights in creativity. It delights in creating new forms. How do I know that?

Well, just look around on the planet here, the millions of life forms in the sea, on land, in the air. The universe delights in creating this multiplicity of forms and it delights in experiencing itself through all those forms. Because you are not a separate entity.

It's not the case as sometimes the ego, ego itself believes that here's me and there's the rest of the world or the universe. Or the ego thinks that it is in the universe. It's somehow suddenly appeared, fallen into this universe.

And then where am I? On this, I'm in this universe. You're not in the universe.

You are the universe. The one life expressing itself through countless life forms. And there's a growing complexity in life forms.

And with every experience, the universe is experiencing itself. Your life is extremely differentiated in human beings. The way in which life or the universe or the one consciousness experiences itself in this dreamlike world is extremely differentiated.

It is amazing that every human being is different of those billions of humans on the planet. Every human not only looks different, you could recognize if you know one person out of these billions, I can't remember how many billions on the planet now, you could recognize this person out of billions of other human beings just by looking at their face. This is how differentiated it is on the surface level already.

And then every life experience, of course there are many similarities, but there's a uniqueness to every life experience. Every life experience is a world that arises and subsides. My mother's life, your mother's life, your parents' life, anybody's life, was a particular world.

The way she experienced the world was very different from the way I experienced. It's like my mother and I, and I'm just taking one example from my personal experience, seemed to inhabit completely different universes, but we were in the same place. But experiencing life in a totally, totally different way.

And the universe delights in that complexity of experience, so it wants to experience itself as form. It means, and so the forms become evolving more, more complex. The humans that are alive now have far greater complexity than the humans that were alive 10,000 years ago, or 50,000 years ago.

Life at that time was more simple. Gather the food, gather the plants, or hunt an animal if they did that, prepare the meal, go out hunting, come back home. It's fairly simple.

It wasn't the complexity of New York City, LA, freeways, and all that's behind that. There were nuclear physics, whatever, and so on. So the universe delights in that, and you are an expression of that.

It wants to become conscious of itself through you, and it's doing that, attempting to do that through humans, but that one consciousness is not separate from you. You are an expression of it. But the universe also wants to know itself deeply, its own source.

It wants the source realization also. So I know that because I know it by looking within myself. There is an outgoing movement into creation, and there's a return movement that wants to realize itself in its essence.

The universe wants both. It wants to go out and create. It also wants to realize its own essence through you.

In a human life that expresses as wanting to do things in this life, wanting to contribute to this life, wanting to create something, to make something of your life, your so-called life, it expresses as that, and the other, the return movement, so you have the outward movement of the universe, the return movement expresses as coming totally into the present moment, stepping away from becoming into being. Becoming is the outward movement. What can I do now?

I need to do something. I want to create this. I feel that this wants to, there's something coming through me.

I feel a piece of music wants to come through me. A book wants to be written or something. Whatever, I want to do this or create this, set up this business or that or whatever, and then it's this becoming, doing, but then there's another movement that says, I just want to be and be still and this present moment, go deeply into this moment.

I don't need to become anything at all. I just want to be fully who I am already and go deeply into being. So you have, it's almost this contradictory movements.

In some humans, the outward tendency is greater. In others, the inward tendency is greater. Both are necessary and somehow both need to be there as long as you're here in a human form, both to some extent will be in you, but there will be different to different degrees.

Some are much more going within and to being, to the source, but I would suggest that it's not either or. There are certain spiritual additions that look upon it as more as either or. They say, forget about the world.

Just realize who you are and then you can just sit in a corner for the rest of your life and never do anything again. You don't need to. That's one way, but for us, it's finding a certain balance, which doesn't mean it needs to be totally in balance.

There are very few humans who are totally balanced between the outward movement of creating and the inward movement of connecting with your inner being at the source of all life. You need to have both so that the universe can create through you without losing itself in its creations. So you can create not from a place of egoic need where you depend on the outcome.

If I don't get that, I'll kill myself. If I don't achieve, if I don't get famous and rich, I don't know what I'll do. Not that, but a playful participation in the world of form and contributing to it, to the world of form without losing itself in the creation and in the doing.

If you become stressed, means you're losing yourself in the doing. This is more important than you completely forget. You become uprooted.

You're no longer connected to the spaciousness, the unconditioned, the one within. So to be and do at the same time. But some humans, yes, are much more drawn to being.

I call them frequency holders. They hold to the frequency of being on the planet. They're not interested in creating huge things out there.

They're interested in doing perhaps little things, gardening, cooking, looking after animals, being with animals, helping humans in some capacity, helping even physical, helping humans with their bodies and so on. So they're frequency holders. They're more into being than there's some doing, but you cannot, you always have to do something.

You can't, but they don't put the emphasis on doing, the emphasis on being, and then they allow presence to flow into what they do, and they affect the world also very significantly. Others have a greater tendency to performing creative action. They need to go out there and become active, but their challenge is not to get lost in what they do and thinking that's all important.

They forget that this is a play of form, and then there comes a seriousness and a heaviness into the doing, and they get unhappy. And when you are unhappy, whatever you create has some flavor of that unhappiness. So the divine purpose of the universe, to summarize my long explanation, is to know itself both through the creation of form and through realization of the formless essence of all life.

And that is the divine purpose of the universe, and that you are here as part of that. That's it. Thank you.

That's the secret of the universe. As far as humans are concerned in their present evolutionary stage, the secret lies in simply no longer internally resisting, denying, or running away from what is at this moment, is whatever is at this moment. To find an inner alignment with the form that this moment takes.

And the conceptualized egoic entity can't do that, but you can do that. When you see the truth of it, there's the possibility of living in a state of yes to what is, an inner yes. The conceptualized egoic entity lives in the state of no to what is.

And that is the greatest transformation happens when there's the shift in you internally from denying the present moment because it's not yet enough, it's not really what I wanted, this shouldn't be happening, I want something else, I definitely don't want this, I want the next moment, it's going to be much more complete. But you always have only this. And then the strange thing happens, at first sight it seems that the form that this moment takes, because that's all it is, there are not many moments in your life, there's only this moment ever.

But the form that this moment takes changes continuously, different forms come into that space of now, which is that inner space. Forms appear in the space of now in your

life. A situation, a person, an event, a place.

And very often, the form that this moment takes seems to be a limitation, it seems to limit me. I want to be limitless, I want to know myself as limitless. Many people feel that the form that this moment takes, how could I accept that?

Because this form limits me so much, and this could be where you live, it could be relationships, it could be your physical body. You cannot not encounter limitations in the world of form. You can change, you can have slightly more pleasant limitations.

You could be sitting in a tiny little room and saying, oh, I'm so limited here, I want to expand, I want to live in a mansion. And you might succeed. 10 years later, five years later, you live in a mansion, you seem to have expanded, and then you sit in your mansion.

What now? For a while, it feels great, you have expanded because you have identified with the thought form of mansion, you have expanded. But sooner or later, the mansion will limit you in other ways.

Your new life situation will suddenly show you there are other limitations. You may become famous, and suddenly discover that great limitations come with fame. You're free of the limitations that came with poverty, and now you encounter other limitations that come with that.

So it's yes, you can play around with different forms in your life and experiment and expand into other forms, not expecting to find the limitless in the world of form and realizing in one way or another, the form that this moment takes will be some form of limitation that it is in the nature of form to be limited. And that's a deep realization. And then the running away from the form that this moment takes the reactive relationship to the form that this moment takes isn't there anymore when you see the truth of this and are able to say yes to the form that this moment takes instead of resisting the form that this moment takes internally, which keeps you trapped in your own mental form.

So what does that mean? It means, quite simply, you become friendly with what is. It doesn't mean now you're condemned to non-action.

Out of that state of yes, intelligent action arises when it's needed, not when it's not needed. You embrace what is. Even if it seems very limited or limiting because it already is.

You can't remove is out of existence. So you become internally aligned with that. So when you say yes to what is, space arises, so to speak, around what is.

This is a way of speaking, but that's all we can do here. A sense of space or spaciousness arises around the form that this moment takes. And that liberates you from the

limitations of form.

And you cannot find the spaciousness by always running away from the forms that arise, but being with them. Surrendering to the form that this moment takes is the key. The inner surrender, whatever is, is part of the totality, the web of interconnectedness that is the universe.

This event is part of that. There is a certain inevitability to the form that this moment takes. Yes, then perhaps action arises and it changes.

You're actually amazed how quickly the form that this moment changes when you don't resist it anymore internally, because a greater intelligence comes into play now. And things, miraculous things can happen even on the level of form, but they didn't happen when you lived in non-alignment with it. They only happen when you live in alignment with it.

And to some people, that means, yes, to the most dreadful limitation. And that is why traditionally it's people who reached that realization found the most dreadful limitation in their life and surrendered to that. The archetype of that is Jesus on the cross.

This is the human archetype. This is true for each human being. The most unacceptable form of limitation that a human, and you don't need to be a Christian to believe this or to see the truth of it.

In fact, if you're a Christian, you may not see it because they tend to have a narrow interpretation of something that is very deep. So you have somebody on the, a human being in a situation that is a manifestation of the most extreme limitation, totally. And symbolically the words that came out of his mouth were at first, why has thou abandoned me, God?

The last, no. The next words that came were not my will, but thy will be done, which means thy will is the will of the one, not to make it into a mental concept. The will of the one is whatever is now, not my will, but thy will be done, a complete yes.

And at that moment, the cross, which is the symbol of the ultimate limitation becomes a symbol of the divine. It's the dual symbolism of the cross is, it's a torture instrument and it's a symbol of the divine. And that is whatever may be happening in your life and be the greatest limitation in your life.

It is not only the limitation, it's also the opening. When it's not internally resisted, the opening into space. Because space comes with a yes to what is.

You are no longer bound to what is. You are no longer bound to the form. You know yourself as the formless one life, one consciousness.

That's the true happiness that lasts. The heart of happiness, the core of happiness, not the superficial happiness that goes. And the next moment.

Ooh. So nothing needs to change for this to happen in your life, this transition. Whatever is, is the best that is for you at this moment.

You work with that. Say yes to that. Don't believe the mind when it says, okay, I'll say yes when I get this out of the way.

Okay. And enormous power moves into your life. The very intelligence of the universe manifests through this form, which then becomes an opening.

And it's the end of suffering. The end of the suffering entity. You may still get a toothache from time to time, but that is how it is too.

Surrender to that also. Surrender. That's all.

No time is required for the shift in consciousness. You can only do it now. Yes to now.

And find yourself through that. Thank you. There's such aliveness to the field of now.

It doesn't really matter where you go, what the things are that surround you. It's relative, they matter relatively, but not absolutely. And then the universe around you is recognized as playful forms that come and go.

Experiences, different places come and go. It's a bit like when you are rooted in the now, you are rooted in being. You are rooted in yourself.

And there's such fullness to now. It is the fullness of life itself, because before life becomes a thing, before life becomes an object, before life becomes a life form, there is life, consciousness, whatever word. And to know yourself as that is the ultimate liberation. What is liberation?

What are you liberated from? You are liberated from the world of things, from obsession, from being consumed by things, which includes thoughts. You are liberated from time, also as an obsession that you are consumed by.

And you are liberated from a very heavy sense of self. The me, what the Buddha called the self. Ah, all that.

The key then, the little opening into what we might call space consciousness. This is not from science fiction. Space consciousness within yourself.

The unconditioned consciousness. How do I get from being consumed and identified with object consciousness to recognizing myself as space? Ah, it doesn't work by trying to run away from the world.

It's through allowing whatever form this moment takes, the world of form, the world of objects, allowing whatever form this moment takes internally allowing it to be as it is.

[Speaker 3] (2:11:47 - 2:11:50)

Okay, and then you started to have an education in England?

[Speaker 1] (2:11:50 - 2:27:16)

Yes, in England I was offered a job. Although I didn't have any formal qualifications, miraculously somebody offered me a job. And I was actually teaching English and Spanish, sorry, German and Spanish for a few years at a language school.

And then a kind of quest started. And also what also started at that point was already the beginnings of depression that I would experience periodically. And living in a state of increasing anxiety, a kind of generalized anxiety.

And I was looking for some answer to the dilemma of life and living. And I was looking to philosophy and the intellect for an answer. So I began to read a lot.

And then I thought the answers would probably be found at the universities, the professors would know. So I took the exams that I needed in evening classes to get to university. And then I went on to London University where I did languages and literature.

And increasingly became more and more unhappy and continued to search and absorb more and more knowledge. And gradually beginning to realize that they didn't really have the answers to life's dilemma. I remember there was one professor at London University that I liked very much.

I would go to his classes and admired him. He was very knowledgeable. And one day we arrived on a Monday morning and we were told that he had just committed suicide.

And that shook me inside. And I realized that suddenly these people that I had looked to for an answer didn't have it either. Yeah.

And so my depression intensified and I did very well in the degree examinations because I studied so hard out of fear, really. I was driven by anxiety. And then after graduating from London University, I didn't do anything for about a year.

And that was the year in which I became even more unhappy and depressed and when an inner shift suddenly happened inside me. It was in my 29th year, I woke up in the middle of the night and this was not uncommon for me, waking up in the middle of the night and feeling intensely depressed and in a state of great fear at the same time. And that happened again that night and the thought occurred to me, I can't live with myself any longer.

And that thought repeated itself in my mind. I just, I can't live with myself. And then suddenly I looked at the thought, I kind of stood back from that thought and looked at it and said, that's a strange thought.

I cannot live with myself. Am I one or am I two? This thought seems to show that there's two people here, I and the self that I cannot live with.

I didn't have an answer to that question. It's just that question, that puzzle arose in my mind. Much later, it reminded me of a koans that they have in Zen that are puzzles that are designed to stop the mind.

For example, what is the sound of one hand clapping is a famous koan. And it doesn't have an answer on an intellectual level. And so the question that arose in my mind also didn't have an answer on an intellectual level.

Who am I and who is myself that I cannot live with? But that question triggered an inner shift, something inside me that I didn't understand it at that point must have disidentified from the self, the unhappy me, as I later called it. So a kind of an inner disidentification happened, the I am, which I later recognized as the consciousness that I am, separated itself from the conditioned entity, the conditioned consciousness that was, that provided me with my sense of identity, the self.

And that consisted largely of an unhappy story. So then I felt I was like being drawn into some kind of vortex of energy as if I were disappearing in that. And there was still a moment of resistance and I heard something almost like a voice inside me that said, resist nothing.

So I gave up resisting the feeling of, almost the feeling of disappearing into nothingness. And so that, don't remember very much else of that night. All I know that the next morning I woke up and I opened my eyes and I looked around the room and everything seemed as if I was seeing it for the first time, fresh, new, alive.

The light coming through the windows, familiar objects on the table. They looked fresh, new and alive. So I got up and went out for a walk and I looked around and everything seemed so peaceful, even the traffic in the city seemed so peaceful.

And I knew something strange had happened. There was suddenly, everything was filled with aliveness and peace and I didn't know why. And so, and that went on.

And then this inner peace as the background to all experiences and the background to all sense perceptions, even as the background to my thinking, that then never really left me again. But it took me a long time to understand it, to be able to put it into words. And so a little later I started investigating other spiritual teachings for the first time, Buddhism, Christianity, and more contemporary spiritual teachings.

And very quickly I recognized the truth that is in many cases hiding underneath sometimes centuries of cultural additions, interpretations and misinterpretations. And I could see the truth that's in Buddhism, that's in Christianity, the original teachings. And in turn, they shed light on what had happened to me.

For example, I picked up the New Testament and I read Jesus' words, the peace that passes all understanding. I said, that's exactly what I feel, I have this peace and I don't understand what it is. So he must have had the same experience.

Peace suddenly arose which was not causally related to anything in the external world. It wasn't caused by something wonderful happening in my external environment. So it didn't seem to have a cause, an external cause.

And then later I visited Zen teachers and so on. And again, I recognized the truth of Zen immediately, but they also helped me to understand and put what had happened to me into a wider context. For example, I remember talking to one Buddhist monk who said, who talked about coming to the end of always having to think, thinking.

And he said, Zen is about not thinking ultimately. And I immediately realized something that I actually, strangely, I hadn't realized before, that my thought processes, ever since that happened that night, had become reduced by maybe 80%. So I wasn't actually thinking that much anymore.

And that's why there was so much peace. So I realized the continuous mental noise, as I now call it, which is the compulsive and largely useless thinking that most people are continuously engaged in, that had come to an end. There would still be some thought, and thought could, I could use thinking when I needed it, and occasionally thoughts would come in and out.

But there were huge stretches of no thought. And in those long gaps and intervals of no thought, inner peace, and I was still anxious, but covered up anxiety, the hype themselves already, what they may perhaps are looking for on the outside. The aliveness, the peace, the sense of deep inner fulfillment is already present in every human being as their innermost essence.

So it's not a question of needing to obtain or acquire something new, which is often what spiritual seekers are looking for. Everybody's looking for to acquire something to fulfill him or herself. They may be looking for it on a material level, or on the level of experiences, or on the level of accumulating knowledge, or accumulating wealth, or spiritual seekers want to add more spiritual experiences to who they are, or find themselves at some point in the future.

And you can't, because if you're looking to the future to find yourself, you're missing yourself already, the essence of your being, which you can only find in the now. So my

realization that night took me years to understand, and in the process of understanding it, at the same time, people would already come to me occasionally and ask questions. So gradually I was able to talk about it, and I was able to recognize in others what I had been through.

It's the same dilemma, perhaps with the exception that I was suffering from it more acutely than many others. That's all. I was even more deeply immersed in the mental noise and the emotional turmoil than would be normal.

But the same mechanism operates in everyone. So the teaching now is to point out that there is a dimension in identify with as yourself, personal history that most is who they are, present inner alignment with now, as I call it, which is life itself. The stream of thinking is always concerned with past and future.

So for most people who are identified with thinking all the time, every thought is invested with a sense of self and me. Every thought grips you completely and you are in it. This is what identified means.

Every thought that arises becomes a me, and you think it and you're in it. And so most people are dragged along all day long by this mind stream, one thought after another. And within that mind stream, there is a mind made sense of self and me, consisting of past memories and experiences and things that my mind has identified with and that contribute to my identity.

They're all thought forms. For example, my possessions, my knowledge, my experiences, or what people have done to me, what I have done to people, things that whatever you identify with and then hang on to in your mind becomes a me. And that was really the self that that night I recognized as not really me.

So there's the mind stream, there's identification with the mind stream, and there's the possibility of stepping out of the mind stream by accessing the present moment. Now to most people, the present moment is almost doesn't exist because what they're really interested in is the next moment or the one after that. So they live always towards the future, they live towards the next moment.

And unconsciously, they regard the next moment, the next point in the future that they need to get to, unconsciously, they regard that as more important than this moment. Not realizing that the future moment that they so desperately want to get to, tonight, tomorrow, whatever, or in any activity needing, wanting to get it out of the way as quickly as possible, needing to get to the end point. On a small scale, on a large scale.

[Speaker 4] (2:27:17 - 2:27:19)

Yes. For example.

[Speaker 1] (2:27:19 - 2:33:00)

Yes. And so, they don't recognize that the future has no existence except as a thought form. So when you always live towards the future, you live your life trapped in the conceptual reality of thought forms, which assumes a greater significance for you than the immediate reality of life, which is always now, because your life consists entirely of the present moment.

And to most people, that's, if you truly realize the significance of that statement, your entire life consists of the present moment. Your life is never not this moment. Even when you remember the past, you can only remember it now.

And when you think about the future, you can only think about it now. But people live as if the present moment were an obstacle that they need to overcome in order to get to some better point, which never arrives. So that's a mad way to live.

And it makes living hard. It makes living into an effort. This is the most powerful species on the planet because through the humans are not physically the strongest species, but they were able to dominate all the other species because of their ability to think.

And so that developed slowly, probably in a mythological form, it's expressed in the story of Genesis at the beginning of the Bible, when they eat this apple that comes from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad to differentiate this, that, that comes only through the ability to think, to analyze, to separate. And so that gradually developed in humans. And at first it wasn't a problem.

It opened up new possibilities. Then over thousands and thousands of years, the thinking mind became stronger. It grew and grew.

And gradually they lost connectedness with something that is deeper and more essential within themselves. We could call that being, the sense of aliveness, a deeper intelligence, even, that is more than just the thoughts that go on in your head. So gradually humans, because of the growth of the thinking mind, lost the ability to sense the deeper connectedness with life.

And then now we have arrived at a point where our whole sense of who we are is caught up in the mind and in thought. So we have been through an evolutionary stage, which was a necessary one for humanity. And we could call that the stage of mind, the stage of thought.

And to such a point now that we are completely possessed, I use that word, we are possessed by the mind without knowing it. We cannot stop thinking, it seems. We can, but for most people, that's not yet a reality.

They have to think, the compulsion to think and to derive your sense of self from the

movement of thought. We are arriving at the end of this whole evolutionary stage. And for humanity now to go on, it needs to transcend the mind, no longer be possessed by the mind, to go beyond the compulsion to think into a deeper level of being.

So it's almost like regaining what they have lost. But when you regain something that you lost, you regain it with a deeper awareness. And this is the process that we are involved in now, that humanity is involved in now, because an evolutionary transformation, a transformation of consciousness really is no longer a luxury, so to speak, is no longer optional for humanity.

For the first time in the history of humanity, the transformation of consciousness is a necessity if humanity is to survive, because we are creating havoc on the planet. We are creating hell to a large extent on a planet that potentially is paradise.

[Speaker 3] (2:33:01 - 2:33:14)

Is that why you, I mean, you could have chosen just to stay on your own and being on your own, but you chose to be a teacher and to go out and teach. Why is that?

[Speaker 1] (2:33:14 - 2:35:14)

Yes, being a teacher was the response to a demand that came to me. So it was not so much, it wasn't a conscious choice that, oh, I want to teach or I need to teach. It simply arose out of, first of all, individual people coming to me and asking questions or wanting some kind of help or becoming drawn, becoming interested in what I had to say and experiencing an inner shift after coming a few times.

And so being a teacher that developed organically without me ever deciding I want to be a teacher. And so from seeing individuals and gradually developed into occasionally meeting in small groups and that went on for a few years. And out of all these meetings with individual people and small groups, I took notes after meeting with people often because things that I said in those individual sessions or group meetings were things that were new to me also, they came out of that moment.

They came out as a response to a person's question. So I would often take notes and I had a collection of notes after a few years. And some of those notes later became incorporated into the power of now, the book.

And so the power of now is in part the result of my work with people over a number of years. And in part, the arising of also a new teaching in the process of writing it.

[Speaker 3] (2:35:16 - 2:35:26)

I read in an interview you gave that for a lot of years you were only absorbed in being and you were not doing anything.

[Speaker 1] (2:35:27 - 2:35:27)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (2:35:27 - 2:35:33)

And it was a kind of unbalance in your life. Yes. Could you describe that?

[Speaker 1] (2:35:34 - 2:38:31)

Yes. Well, after the transformation happened that night, my external life for a few more years went on as if nothing much had changed on the external level. I went on to do graduate work.

However, my heart was never fully in it anymore in intellectual pursuits, in analytical work. But that was my external life had a certain momentum. So it went on for a few more years and then that momentum came to an end.

And a point arrived when I was at Cambridge doing graduate work and some teaching. And suddenly I realized this has come to an end and I simply walked away from it all. And after that, two years followed in which I did very little and I didn't have a home of my own.

I would drift from here to there, spend most days just sitting. When it was warm enough, I would sit outside on park benches or walk around. I was then in London at that time.

And I was so deeply immersed in the peace, almost the bliss of the simple experience of being, the simple feeling, the goodness of life every moment that I lost interest in future completely. There were no ambitions and I wasn't even interested in doing anything. So from an external viewpoint, one could say my life for a while became unbalanced.

I became so deeply immersed in being that I lost interest in doing. One could almost say I lost the ability for a while to be active in the world. And then gradually the ability to be active in the world came back.

So a balance after a while reestablished itself. So I'm now able to be active in the world and at the same time be rooted in being. One does not exclude the other.

But for some reason, I had to go very deeply within for a while. Perhaps even on a larger scale, it may be that some people for a while have to go very deeply into being simply to provide a balance on the level of the collective consciousness because most human beings are totally lost in doing. So it may require a few humans who go very deeply into being to provide a balance.

Although on a personal level, it might look as if they were unbalanced.

[Speaker 3] (2:38:32 - 2:38:41)

Are you always in presence now? I mean, don't you get relapses? Don't you ever get angry or frustrated?

Is it?

[Speaker 1] (2:38:42 - 2:40:14)

No. I live in a surrender to the present moment. And so that is always there.

Whatever happens right now, I recognize that it is futile to argue with whatever is happening in this moment. So emotions occasionally still come. I can, if I see human suffering, I sometimes weep and I can cry.

And yet even then, there's a deep sense of peace in the background. Even though I may cry externally if I see, especially humans inflicting so much suffering on other human beings and on animals and on nature. On the planet.

So sometimes tears come and yet deep down, I know that ultimately life is timeless and indestructible. And I know that death is not the opposite of life, but only the opposite of birth. Life is beyond the forms of life.

Life is timeless and immortal. That which underlies the entire manifested world. And that dimension is present in each human being.

[Speaker 3] (2:40:19 - 2:40:21)

So what is your life like today? Do you have a family?

[Speaker 1] (2:40:23 - 2:45:08)

No, my life is now very different from what it was before, especially before the book came out. I was already teaching before the book came out, but soon after the book came out, the book grew very quickly. At first through word of mouth for one year, and then other people discovered it and started writing about it and speaking about it and then it accelerated.

So soon after the book came out, the teaching developed a momentum that was almost overwhelming. And it turned my external life around completely from living a very sheltered life, a very quiet life, almost a hermit-like life. Suddenly everybody wanted me to teach and demands for this and that were coming in, invitations flooding in from all over the world.

And then I responded at the beginning to almost every invitation. And then I realized it's impossible. I can no longer respond to every invitation.

So nevertheless, my life is now almost public and the groups become bigger and bigger. In the United States, the average number for talks is 2000 people now. And so I'm very much out there in the world.

And this is not something that naturally I would have chosen for myself. My natural inclination would be to be withdrawn, not to be known. I like to be invisible in public places, not to be noticed.

And that becomes more difficult now. And yet I accept the fact that this is how it is. So there's a lot of traveling.

And there's been so much in the past few years that now I feel I need to cut back for a while. And I believe, my feeling is that the cycle of going out into the world, which is lasting now for six years, may be coming to an end and there may be coming a cycle of withdrawal for a little while in which another book may come into being. And so I've had to surrender to the fact that my external life changed completely.

It's been wonderful too, to see how many people are being reached by the teaching, the book and the talks and the retreats. How many people are open to the message? That was the greatest surprise after the book came out, because when I was writing the book, the book wrote itself, one can almost say, my feeling was that only people who had already been on the spiritual path for a long time would respond to the book.

And that was not the case. People responded to the book, both people who had been on the path for many years, they responded, but also people who had never read a spiritual book in their lives, who had never had access to that dimension, they suddenly wrote to me and said, my life has changed, this is incredible. I've read this book several times already and it's fresh and new every time and there's so much peace in my life suddenly.

So the books seems to have reached all kinds of people, no matter what their background is. Also education doesn't seem to matter very much. Some highly educated people are open to it and others who are not equally open because it's not difficult to understand on an intellectual level.

And yet, not everybody is open to the books. There are some people, there are people who wrote to me and said, I bought a copy for a close friend and he found it completely meaningless. He read two or three pages and said, I don't, it doesn't make sense to me and so they put the book on the shelf and it may well be that in 10 or 20 years time, they take the book down from the shelf again and suddenly there's an inner readiness.

So many people are open, but certainly not everybody.

[Speaker 3] (2:45:09 - 2:45:24)

I have some more questions about this new situation of yours. I mean, you have become

a success and your books have sold in millions of copies all over the world and you have become famous and you're making a lot of money. How do you handle that?

[Speaker 1] (2:45:27 - 2:47:54)

I'm not very good at handling the external things like money so basically it hasn't made very much difference to my life and I haven't really paid much attention to it. Most of my attention is absorbed by teaching or answering questions and so on and yes, I live in somewhat more spacious surroundings now than I used to, but that's really all. So that hasn't made very much difference.

I'm hardly aware of it. For a large part of my life, I lived with very little money and probably people would have said I lived below the poverty line as they call it and yet I never felt poor. I always felt I had quite enough and now I don't feel wealthy any more than I did then.

So it's exactly the same feeling. So it's a very abstract thing, the fact that now there is more wealth in my life on the external dimension is only an abstract truth to me. It has not affected me inside at all and it's only very slightly affected my external life.

I don't, I walk around cities and look at shops and I sometimes like to look at things, but very rarely do I actually feel the impulse to go and buy something. It's enough to look at a beautiful object and then walk on. So I don't know what, I wouldn't know what to buy with it.

There is the possibility at some point that there may be a center, a spiritual center coming into being. So if that happens, then some of the income from the book may flow into that. That is something that I'm not actively planning now, but I have a feeling it may happen.

[Speaker 3] (2:47:56 - 2:48:11)

And I also imagine that many people want to have something from you and they are, maybe they are admiring you, putting you in a place of a guru or, and how do you relate to that? Do you need to protect yourself or?

[Speaker 1] (2:48:11 - 2:51:03)

Yes, before it used to be the way that people, anybody who wanted to see me would just call me and or talk to me on the phone. I would talk to them, say, can I see you? Yes, come.

And then after the book came out, that became impossible because the phone kept ringing. And so in one sense, when I was only reaching a small number of people, however, there was the satisfaction of having close personal contact with people who

came to me. Now the close personal contact, because the numbers have grown so much, that has become lost to a large extent.

And yet the teaching is reaching far, far, far more people than it did before. So really, and this is very much the same in any situation in life. Every situation has its own limitations.

There were certain limitations to my life on an external level when the teaching was not yet reaching many people. The teaching was very limited in that sense, although it was very satisfying. Now the limitation is that people cannot access me personally very easily.

I have to have several people in between me and the world. Simply because on a practical level, it's the only way I can live. I cannot reply to every email or answer every letter and thousands and thousands of letters come in all the time and emails.

And I cannot just pick up the phone and answer it so that it's harder for individual people to reach me. It's difficult, if not impossible. And that's simply, I need to accept that is a limitation that's unavoidable.

Knowing, however, that the teaching is reaching far more people than ever before. Yes, it's a pity. I still sometimes have a little group at home in Vancouver of people I've known for a long time.

Even before the book came out, they used to come to see me. So occasionally, we get together as a little group of 20 people or so in my living room. And I enjoy that very much.

So that's how it is. It's always a question of surrendering to whatever the present moment presents you with and whatever limitations there may be at this moment. There's no situation that is free of limitation of one kind or another.

[Speaker 3] (2:51:05 - 2:51:13)

Do you have an explanation why your teaching applies so much to modern people?

[Speaker 1] (2:51:14 - 2:55:50)

Well, the terms used, the words, the terminology that is used in the teaching, the words that are used, which are no more than pointers, not philosophical explanations, they are relatively neutral. They don't carry the weight of centuries and centuries of past as they do in ancient teachings. So they're not culturally conditioned in that sense, relatively neutral.

And so they can reach many people no matter what their background is. People who may have a religious background can be reached if they are open enough, because I

don't deny that there is deep truth in every religion. This is why I quote in The Power of Now from Buddhism and Hinduism and Christian teachings.

And even people who have no religious background whatsoever can be reached by the teaching. This is one reason perhaps why it has reached so many people and another reason is that The Power of Now was written, it came out of that state of consciousness that it points to. So it came out of a state of inner stillness and receptiveness spontaneously.

The writing was a spontaneous act, although I incorporated some of the writings that I had done in previous years. There was an enormous, very strong creative impulse that flew into the writing, it flowed into the writing. So the book contains an energy, this sounds perhaps a little mysterious, but many people have said it, that when people read the book, the words go beyond the mere informational value of the words.

This is why one can reread the book many times and still feel it's fresh and new. And every time you read, and maybe it may just be one or two pages, the reading of it can put you back into the state of what the state that I call presence, because whatever the book speaks about ultimately points to that inner state of alignment with the present moment. So people can just pick up a book, read a couple of pages, and feel the mental noise slows down or subsides, and they become awake again, alert, present in the now, and they can sense some peace inside.

And so that's what it's all about. So that is at work in the book, and it is also at work in the group sessions, because as you, in the group sessions, nothing is ever prepared. I don't come with a script.

I don't even come with any idea in my head what we are going to do today or talk about today. When I start, when I sit down on the chair, I have no idea even a few seconds before opening my mouth what's going to come out. So in that sense, you can say it comes really out of the immediacy of the present moment.

And so what words come out depends very often on the energy field of the group. And so there's an interaction between the teaching, the teacher, and the taught. There's an ancient Eastern saying that says, the teacher and the taught together produce the teaching.

And that's how it is. And that's why the teaching has great power, because it doesn't come from the accumulated knowledge of the mind, but it comes out of the immediacy of the present moment. It's not prepared, and even on a retreat that lasts for three, four, five days sometimes, there's absolutely no pre-planned structure to the retreat.

It all grows organically out of the present moment.

[Speaker 3] (2:55:55 - 2:56:30)

I have one question, at least one more. You talk about surrendering, and you talk about suffering as one path to surrendering to presence. And you say that some people don't need the suffering.

But anyway, surrendering is beyond will and wanting. So what does it take? And what about grace?

I imagine that it takes grace also. Could you comment on that?

[Speaker 1] (2:56:31 - 3:01:24)

Yes. You won't surrender, which means, surrender means only accept this moment as it is. But you won't be able to surrender unless you're completely fed up with suffering.

You've had enough suffering. And at some level, you recognize that most of your suffering is self-created. It is created out of resistance to what is.

It is created out of an interpretation of something that is. It comes from a thought, from an interpretation, not from the situation. So you realize, really, that I've had enough suffering, and only when you've truly had enough suffering in your life are you able to say, I don't need it anymore.

Suffering is a wonderful teacher. Suffering is most people's only spiritual teacher. And suffering deepens you.

It gradually erodes the mind-made sense of self, the ego. And for some people, the point arrives where they realize, I have suffered enough. And that, for example, is the case with almost all the people who come to a retreat.

If you ask them, they've all had their share of human suffering. Otherwise, they wouldn't be open to the message. They've had their share of human suffering, and they've reached a point where they are ready to listen to the message that says there is another way to live.

There is another way in which you can live that does not create further suffering for yourself. Because to a large extent, humans create their own suffering. And so, when you are ready to hear that message, and that's really the message that is in every religion, that's the message, the central message of Buddhism is the end of suffering.

And even the central message of the teaching of Jesus is finding the pearl of great price, finding the kingdom of heaven that is within you here and now, as Jesus says. And that, of course, is the end of living in a state of suffering. So, one could say that you need suffering for you to realize, for you to come to a point of realization that you do not need to suffer anymore.

There's a paradox here. If I had not suffered, this teaching would not exist. So, you could

say it has come partly as a result of intense suffering.

Because as a human being, I would not have evolved spiritually if I had not suffered. So, suffering was my main teacher. And suffering is for many people their main teacher.

But then, some people are, when they are ready, they come into contact with a spiritual teaching or teacher. And that can speed up the process of realization that you don't need to suffer anymore. You're ready to hear that.

So, that was, the Buddha talked about nothing else already 2,600 years ago, that there can be an end to self-inflicted suffering. And when you don't inflict suffering on yourself anymore, and remember, it's the thoughts. Your thoughts make you suffer more than anything else.

It's not usually the situation. It's your interpretation of the situation, of how dreadful it all is. And so, when you see that, then you see there is another way to live in which I no longer mentally argue with what is.

And that's the end of self-inflicted suffering. And if I no longer inflict suffering on myself, I no longer inflict suffering on others because the two go together.

[Speaker 3] (3:01:28 - 3:01:36)

But what will make me or somebody else take that step? Is it just acceptance?

[Speaker 1] (3:01:37 - 3:03:13)

It's acceptance, but acceptance won't come unless you've reached this inner point of readiness. And this is why I never try to convince anybody that what I'm saying is true, or they should practice something. I never say you should do this, or trying to convince somebody who doesn't want to believe it, that is pointless.

Only if you are ready internally for it, and so one way of putting it is to say, if you have suffered enough, then you're ready, then you're open to it, and you immediately see the truth of it. You immediately see that you ultimately make yourself suffer. It's not the situation, it's the mental interpretation of the situation, which in most cases is a form of resistance.

And that creates the suffering. And so you need to, when you hear these words, if you don't immediately recognize the truth, if there's an inner arguing, that's fine. There's no should here.

There's no, the teaching never says, this is how you should live. It's only if you can hear the truth of it, it will make sense to you, and then it can help you. So it can only help those who have an inner readiness.

But there are many, many people alive now in whom the readiness is there. They are able to hear it, to truly hear it, and immediately recognize, yes, this is true. Convincing never works.

[Speaker 3] (3:03:15 - 3:03:19)

But being in the present presence, I mean, is it a possibility for everybody?

[Speaker 1] (3:03:21 - 3:03:27)

It's being in the present moment is a possibility for those who are ready for it. Not yet for everybody.

[Speaker 3] (3:03:29 - 3:03:37)

What if we were all living in presence? I mean, what would happen? Would we have electricity, and would it work?

[Speaker 1] (3:03:37 - 3:05:25)

One thing is certain, that the world would look very different from the way it is now. We can't possibly imagine how the human world would look if everybody lived in a different state of consciousness, in a state that is predominantly a state of inner peace. What kind of civilization would we create out of a state of inner peace?

It's impossible to predict. All we can say is that probably, it would not be as complex as it is now. People would not be running around, continuously engaged in largely pointless activities.

It would probably not be such a noisy civilization as it is now, because no civilization has ever been as noisy as this one. And that's simply because whatever human beings create externally is a reflection of their inner state. So we are polluting the planet, simply because our inner selves are being polluted by an enormous amount of negativity, of continuous resistance.

So the outer is always a reflection of the inner. So if the inner is predominantly a state of inner peace, we create a peaceful world on the outside. What exact form that would take, we don't know.

We'd have to see what it is. It would very probably be a much more simple world, more harmonious and beautiful. Not nature is beautiful already, but I'm speaking of the human-made world.

[Speaker 3] (3:05:28 - 3:05:33)

Is it possible, in a few words, to say what is the essence of the teaching? Is that possible?

[Speaker 1] (3:05:36 - 3:08:28)

Well, the essence is very simple, and the essence could probably be taught, and perhaps one day will be taught to very young children at school. And children are very close to it anyway. The essence is, I could put it in the most simple terms, because the most simple is often the most powerful.

The essence is to make the present moment into your friend, not your enemy. So always ask yourself, what is my relationship with the present moment? At this moment, of course.

What is my inner relationship with the present moment? Is the present moment, am I friendly towards the present moment? Or am I hostile towards the present moment?

Is the present moment my enemy? And then that would be enough to bring about a change, because when you realize that you are making the present moment into your enemy, and you also know that that's all you ever have in life, then you realize it is a mad way to live, to treat this moment as if it were an obstacle to where you want to get to. And you never get there, because it's always now.

Then your relationship towards the present moment changes. Yes. It changes and your relationship becomes one of yes rather than no to what is.

It does not mean that you become passive or that you will never do anything again. It simply means that the foundation for any action you take is the state of yes to what is. And if there's a state, the inner state of yes to what is, that is the state of inner peace.

And inner peace is much more powerful as a foundation for right action than the state of resistance and negativity. So that is the essence. Find that state of inner alignment with the present moment, which comes with the yes, and then see what happens.

See how your world changes as you no longer resist the is-ness of this moment.

[Speaker 3] (3:08:31 - 3:08:50)

Thank you. It was what you concluded, the teaching about your role as a teacher. And you said something about you have nothing to teach to nobody, something like that.

Could you just state that, how you see your role as a teacher?

[Speaker 1] (3:08:51 - 3:11:32)

In conventional terms, teaching means that I give you information that you didn't know. I add something to you. So a student absorbs new information, accumulates new information.

But in spiritual teaching, the teacher just points to the truth that is already in every human being. And also points to the way in which that truth that is already in every human being is covered up. And anybody who is ready can immediately recognize the truth of the teaching as if they had already known it, because on some level they already knew it.

And that's why I say, I don't really have anything to teach in the sense of adding information to you. There's nothing that you need to add in order to find yourself and be yourself. You can add on an external level.

It's nice to learn new things. It's nice to explore this or that. And yet on an essential level, the essential level is the level of who you are, your innermost sense of self.

It's the level of being. On the most essential level, no matter where you are at in your life, what your life situation is, on the most essential level, nothing needs to be added to who you are. So the spiritual teaching is not a more, it's not an addition.

It's simply a pointing towards that which is already there. And those who are ready, then suddenly recognize the truth of it. Recognize means they already knew it.

It's almost like remembering, ah, yes. And then there's no question about, they never, convincing is not necessary. It's immediate realization.

Then the spiritual teaching works as it should. So that's how it operates. And that's the difference between a conventional teaching and spiritual teaching.

In some sense, one could say the spiritual teaching is almost the opposite of the conventional teaching. If anything, it takes something away from you. It takes away that which covered up who you are, but it is not taken away by the teacher.

It's taken away by yourself when you see it and become conscious of it.

[Speaker 3] (3:11:33 - 3:11:39)

Yes, that's very clear. Yes. Thank you very much.

Thank you. Thank you for your time.

[Speaker 1] (3:11:49 - 3:49:35)

Now we're here to enter a different state of consciousness. And one important characteristic of the new state of consciousness, you're not waiting for the future to be better than the present. You're not waiting for anything to happen.

Our normal state of consciousness, mankind's normal state of consciousness is a state of non-presence, a state of absence. They're not really here. Your attention is never fully in

the now.

So the fullness of life escapes you and there's a seeking for the fullness of life through future where it can never be found because it doesn't exist. The future comes as the now. When it comes, it's the now.

Now it's so normal to live in such a way that most people never even question it. That's how it is. And that's why life gets so frustrating for many people and it becomes a burden.

They are seeking for something where it cannot be found. They're seeking for the fullness of life, a sense of knowing, a sense of being fully yourself in the future through something that's going to happen in the future. The fullness of being, one day I'll get there.

That's the mindset. And this is the revolutionary teaching that you're not going to get there. You can only be there at this moment.

And to feel the power that is inherent in the now as the power of your own being. Your own being is the totality of your being. The physical is part of that, but it goes deeper.

But the physical is an important part of it. It's not separate from being. The physical is a temporary expression of who you are, but it's not separate from that.

So throughout the day today, as we go more deeply into being, I will be reminding you that it is your entire energy field, your entire physical energy field is part of this state of consciousness of experience of living the fullness of life now with every cell of your body. And as you sit there, not just listen with your ears, almost as if you are listening with every cell of the body to feel the aliveness, the very life that is in every cell, in every organ, the life itself. So to dwell in your own energy field, to be that, so that you're not just listening with a monitor in your head, because then you would quickly get very bored.

If you were only here with your mind and trying to figure out what I'm talking about, boredom would set in very quickly. If you cannot go deeper than level of mind, then you will soon wish that you hadn't come here. And whenever you lose your connectedness with the body, when you're back in mind, there will be moments when you drift off into some fantasy dreamland of future, what's going to happen tonight or tomorrow, or what am I going to watch on TV tonight?

And 10 minutes later, you wake up and suddenly you're back here. That's normal. Now, when I say listen with the entire body, it's a strange way of putting it, but I do not mean just listening to the words.

In a way, the words have second place here. They may be useful pointers or signposts,

but the main teaching is through the state of consciousness itself, that is the state of, I call it stillness sometimes, and an energy field arises in this room that is an expression of the new state of consciousness. It's a powerful energy field, but it doesn't make any noise.

It's still, it's silent. And to be open with your entire being to the energy field, which in the East, they sometimes call it the Buddha field. That is the main reason why we are here.

So to be receptive to that with your entire being, and there's nothing then that you need to figure out with your mind. Your mind isn't really needed here, or it's only peripheral. There was a woman last night after the talk, came to me and she didn't speak any English.

She spoke only French. And she said to me, my French isn't very good. I can understand a bit.

I can't speak it very well. But when she said to me, I didn't understand a word of what you said, but I understood you. I understood with the heart, she said, not with the mind.

My heart understood. So she was open. What she meant, she was open to the energy field.

I call it the energy field of presence. It's very subtle. The mind can't grasp it or figure it out.

You're very alert. It needs to be an alertness to be open to that, an alert presence. And boredom in that state is completely impossible.

It's inconceivable. Boredom is a mental state, a state when you are in the mind, you are disconnected from the aliveness, the fullness and the depth of aliveness of your being, and you're trapped in the mind and the mind isn't getting enough food or stimulus. And then boredom sets in because the mind needs continuous food or stimulus.

What's the next thing I can gobble up that I can get my teeth into? What's next? What's next?

The constant restlessness when you're stuck in the head and all the media is to satisfy that restlessness, to give you food for the mind, mostly totally trivial. And so there's continuous chatter that you get when you switch on things and they talk in an excited voice, switch on the radio and these. If you didn't know any English or whatever language they happen to be speaking, if you didn't know the language and you just listened to the sound, it would sound as if they were saying something incredibly important.

But if you can actually understand what they're saying, it's completely meaningless. So

boredom is a state, is a sign that you're identified with mind and the state of consciousness that we are entering is a state in which boredom just cannot arise. When you are so deeply connected with being, there's such aliveness there.

And in that aliveness, there's the joy of the simple fact of being, beingness, the subtle but very powerful sense of joy that depends on nothing outside. And boredom is impossible there. And then your external experience just becomes an expression or a reflection of the joy of life.

So it becomes pleasant, but you don't seek fulfillment through it. And that's why it becomes so pleasant. The seeking of fulfillment through some experience or other is no longer necessary.

The seeking for fulfillment through some future event, this, that is no longer needed. And that's amazing. That means you can already be who you are fully at this moment.

Welcome to our meditative evening, perhaps meditation. To meditate successfully, the idea that you're doing a meditation can be quite an obstacle. So maybe that's the first thing we can get rid of tonight.

The preconceptions and the expectations that come with that term. So why did we call it guided meditation? Well, we had to use some word to get you here.

You get it. I get it. I get it.

I get it. I get it. I get it.

I get it. I get it. Meditation is usually something that you do among many other things.

Doing implies all kinds of things. It implies time, even future to some extent.

And yet, true meditation, if you even want to call it that, it's better not to call it anything, is not to do with doing, it's not a doing. It's the realization that you are of being, which underlies all doing. Realization is prior to all doing.

Thoughts, emotions, is prior to that. The simple realization, not the realization who you are, because there can be so many perspectives on that, not the realization how you fit into the totality of the cosmos, how that seemingly a little life fleeting existence fits into the totality somewhere. Not realizing how I fit into the whole, it's impossible to comprehend.

But an alignment with the totality, without the need to mentally understand anything, a realization, a simple realization that you are, which is expressed in the sublime words, I am. And if you've missed elementary grammar at school, you might not realize that I am, is the first person singular of the verb to be. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Now you think it's two completely different words. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. The realization that you are, not as a concept, but as a deeper sensing of the life that you are, the aliveness, the life.

And something helpful to realize that is to pretend for one moment that there is no past and no future. Shh, shh, shh. I'm saying pretend so that everybody is still with me.

If I said, if I said there is no past and future, some of you might suddenly start thinking, just a second, aren't you going to sign books in an hour? Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. And the moment you go into thinking, you're off into the realm of mind, the realm of things, object, objects, in your mind.

in consciousness, every thought is an object in consciousness, and every thought has a pulling power. So it arises, and it pulls your attention in, and you start thinking, okay, but there is, I came here half an hour ago, there must be a past. I'm not realizing, of course, when you came here, it was the present moment, and when the books are going to be signed, it'll be the present moment, because there is nothing else.

Okay, but no need to believe that. Let's pretend. Let's pretend for a moment that there is no past and future.

Or let's just say, past and future become peripheral to who you are, there's only this. Oh, that is the entry point into the realization I am. Thinking is not required for that realization.

In fact, it's a hindrance, and you may sense the global feeling of presence or beingness that incorporates what we call the physical body. When you're present, completely present, here, now, you're present, not just with the head, with the totality of your being. In other words, you sense an aliveness that's there in every cell of the body.

That is our meditation, to be present with every cell of the body, a subtle sense of aliveness. In which the personal dimension becomes relatively unimportant. What arises here is the dimension of conscious presence or consciousness itself.

It's spacious. The moment you start to think, a form arises. Consciousness is born into a form, a thought form.

Most human beings on the planet are lost in the forms that arise in their consciousness. And when I say in their consciousness, that's not entirely correct. Because there is not such a thing as my consciousness, ultimately.

There's consciousness, and I am that. If you use the word expression, my consciousness, this whole language unfortunately operates, you create a duality, and so here's me and there's consciousness. The same thing happens when you talk or think about my life, and everybody thinks about it a lot of the time.

It's amazing how fascinating my life is. And that's such a fundamental error or delusion to say my life, because it implies that you have a life, and that implies that you are separate from life. There's you, and there's life, and you have it.

And then of course you start being afraid, because you might lose it. And then what's left of you? So just to say that, to say my life is obviously an illusion, because how could you be separate from life?

You are life. You don't have one. And life takes on form, temporary forms, becomes what looks like a physical form, and on the inner level life becomes thought forms and emotions and sense perceptions.

Forms that consciousness takes, is born into continuously. The continuous dance of form, it's amazing spectacle. Beautiful, wonderful, but it gets heavy and serious when all you know is the forms that consciousness takes.

And you never know yourself as consciousness itself. Being. So we could say the forms that consciousness or life, it's one thing, takes, we could call it existence.

It stands, exist means to stand out. Ex means out from Latin. Instance from stance, standing, to stand out.

So whatever arises, sense perceptions, things, thoughts, they exist, for they have a certain lifespan. Come and go, entire universe exists. Life forms go in and out of existence.

And then there's that which is prior to existence, being, I am. So the play of form is a beautiful thing. Well, forms are things.

But when that is all you know, you don't know that which underlies the dance of form. Then the dance of form is no longer a dance. It's not fun anymore.

It's not experienced or perceived as a play anymore. It becomes deadly serious. Because that's all you know.

And every form matters. It matters, absolutely. You know how worked up people get about things.

And you can see even people who mentally perhaps realize certain truths, they say I'm beyond things now. And then suddenly the phone rings. What happened?

What? He broke the contract. Sir, I've got...

Oh, oh... Oh, oh... Oh, oh...

Oh... Another word for word or form, we could just say the world. And so the world is the

world of things.

It's the world of material things, which absorbs many people's, large part of many people's attention. What's the next thing? They're looking almost for the next thing to acquire, to derive satisfaction from, to associate with, to identify with.

But things are not just material things. And of course material things are everywhere in our civilization particularly. We are suffocating under proliferation of things and bombarded with messages that we need more things.

But things are also events, you know, forms that arise and they pretend to be all important. And life is not a play anymore. And the older you get, the heavier it gets and the more serious it gets.

You may have noticed in the statues of the Buddha, the Buddha has a slight smile usually, the good ones. There are some bad ones where the Buddha looks serious. But the good ones, there's a hint of a smile.

And then you may ask, why is he smiling? If all is nothingness, as some say, emptiness, then there's nothing there to smile about. The smile arises because the Buddha is in touch with that which is prior to things, to objects, to form, to the world.

Not because he has made it in the world. He's not smiling because somebody has just given him a garden for his monks and nuns to walk in. He's in touch with that which is prior to all things.

We could call that if things are objects that arise in the field of consciousness, then consciousness itself could best be described as space, a sense of spaciousness or space in your life, which doesn't exist as your life, by just using language. Space consciousness, which is not a term from science fiction, but refers to the realization that space is the essence of who you are, the spaciousness of simple being. And your entire life experience is determined by whether or not and how much space there is in your life.

And for many humans on the planet, there's no space. It's not that the space isn't there. It cannot be destroyed, done away with, but they don't know it's there.

All they know is the forms. Someone could say, all they know is the dimension of waves and ripples on the surface of life. That's the world.

Experiences, events, sense perceptions, drama, thoughts, emotions, ripples, ripples on the surface of life itself. And I am life. I am the one life.

I speak for each one of us. The I am, that which I am is life itself. It takes on a temporary form that is beautiful.

It's a continuous stepping back from the seduction of things. It's not that you reject

things, but you stay, you can remain conscious of consciousness while you participate in the dance. How does that look in practice?

Somebody comes, says, oh, you know what just happened? This and this and this. In other words, lost in things, the world of things, and it matters.

Each thing matters absolutely. You know this. Okay.

And now there's the possibility either you get drawn into that and react on the same level and fuel that dimension. What can't be done? What are you going to do now?

Or you can be there while that person speaks. You can be there as an alert, aware presence in which the worlds are being received.

[Speaker 4] (3:49:37 - 3:49:39)

Oh, okay.

[Speaker 1] (3:49:41 - 5:20:48)

There's an alertness there. You haven't gone to sleep, but you're in fact much more awake than you would be if you were reacting. Oh, that's warm.

Okay. And for a moment there's a space in which this thing happens, the person is talking. And then you will find yourself saying something or doing something, and it'll be appropriate.

And while you say or do something, there's still a connectedness with the underlying field. It's a global thing. It's the entire being.

A connectedness with the underlying field out of which the doing comes or out of which the words come. Speak. It's much more intelligent.

Certainly the words that come out of the field, which really is the field of pure intelligence, consciousness itself, will be much more relevant, much more powerful, much more intelligent than anything that could come out of the conditioned reactive mind. And another thing that comes with it is there's always when you're in touch with the I am, there are other words you can call it, stillness, beingness, presence. That is also the realm of peace.

That is the realm out of which peaceful action can come. Words, peaceful words, words that have the energy carry still a fragrance of that state of being. Action also can carry that fragrance.

Creation, you can even create something out of that state, like a work of art or whatever it may be, or a little simple object. And whatever comes out of the state of

connectedness with being, and don't trust words, they're never quite right. You're not connected with being because you are being, but we have to use words.

Out of that state of connectedness with being, whatever comes out of that has a beauty to it, has a power to it, has a quality. And it may just be the quality of a simple gesture or the quality of a step, or it doesn't matter what it is. So that's really the purpose of life while you are here in this form, is to be in the two dimensions, one could say, this is nothing final here, the two dimensions of, there's the dimension of the world, and there's the dimension of being or presence, which is the unmanifested or other words that you may want to use.

And the art of living is to be in the world, participate to the extent that you want to or is required of you. And as the old expression goes, to be in the world, but not of it. That's an old question, expression.

So the world, which is the world of things, which includes thoughts, because every thought is an object, it has a form, a thought form. The world of things, including your mind, no longer has the power to draw you in completely. And you no longer give it this absolute reality.

It is the world of the relative. It sounds almost too simple, becoming friendly with the present moment. And all kinds of things happen in the present moment.

And the form that it takes changes continuously. The present moment itself remains as space. And then in that space, something happens.

And the secret to life is to be internally aligned with the form that this moment, the only moment there ever is, takes. Instead of rejecting the form that this moment takes or devalue it and make it into a means to an end. Internally aligned means yes, you say yes to what is.

Your child hasn't brushed his or her teeth yet. That's what is. Why don't you brush your teeth now?

There's a different way of doing things. Now you tell me, well, you haven't experienced, I have four children. It's, there is another way of doing things that honors life, which is now.

And only in honoring life, in saying yes to the form that this moment takes, can you go beyond that in yourself which is beyond form. If you react against the form that this moment takes, you will continue to be trapped in form. A form identity, a me that feels stronger every time it reacts against something.

The me gets stronger in every no to what is. Every time you can, you argue with what is, you complain about what is, the little me that is a mental formation feels stronger for a

while. And then you have to look for the next thing to argue with.

So the secret is, the form that this moment takes often looks like a limitation on your freedom. It may look like a limitation on your life one way or another. You're sitting in an office, but you don't want to be there.

You're in a traffic jam, but you don't want to be there. So that's a limitation. Your partner is getting obnoxious.

So that's a limitation. There's always something that should, I want to be free. I want to be fully myself, not this.

And that keeps you trapped. It's only when you bring a yes to the form that this moment takes, that's to do with a manifested world. The world of manifestation is producing the form that this moment takes.

As an event, a person wanting something, whatever it may be, a situation, a place, that's the form. And you may say, what? Doesn't make sense.

I don't want this. But it is. And whatever is, is part of the totality.

The entire universe has brought about the form that this moment takes. Otherwise it couldn't be. Everything is totally interconnected.

Now, you may not be able to see how these things are interconnected. Why should I be stuck in this traffic jam right now? Does it make sense?

What is the purpose in that? It shouldn't be. But yet it is.

And if you become internally aligned with the form, which a moment ago looked like an obstacle, but now you say, well, it is. It is. There it is.

With that, space, the dimension of space within yourself, which is being, opens up. Because you haven't made yourself smaller by reacting against the form. You haven't trapped yourself in the form identity by reacting against some form that this moment takes.

So by saying yes to the form that is, and in some cases, it is truly, from a conventional viewpoint, one would say, this is terrible. Why, how could this happen to a human being? Or to me?

How can this happen to me? I don't, this is not what I want. It's awful.

It could be a serious, an illness, whatever, great loss, collapse. Somebody close to you dies, goes away, leaves you. Forms are not reliable in this world.

They are fleeting. That includes the human form. Even the seemingly solid structures are

not really that solid.

They just look solid. Talk to a physicist, he'll tell you they are not solid at all. And sometimes you realize they are not solid.

So suddenly something crumbles. A form crumbles. The form and the formless.

And you cannot find the dimension of the formless as long as you are battling against the world of form. I want freedom. I want to find myself.

And I can't find myself sitting in front of this computer screen. I can't find myself having to clean this right now. I want to be doing something meaningful.

I want to, you're missing something, not something, you're missing that which is concealed underneath the form that this moment takes. And that's easy to do. And that's the great deception that most humans are subject to.

What they are looking for in some future moment is already here, hiding in the most unlikely place called the present moment. What is it that they're looking for? What all the people that are running around like rabbits or whatever in the cities, there must be some purpose.

Where are they all running to? What is their purpose? And they all have, even if they want more money or they want more this or more that, hiding behind that, there's always, they want to be more fully themselves.

They want to feel a sense of security, of aliveness. They want to be more fully who they are. They want to, they're looking for themselves.

They're looking for an ultimate sense of being rootedness, of saying, yes, I have arrived. I'm fully myself now, secure. And they are looking through this or that or that.

They try to get there, not realizing that they can't. And it's been hiding all along underneath the seemingly unsatisfactory form that this moment takes. So you come, it's a completely different way to live, the alignment with the suchness of this moment.

It's only then, that is the true meditation. You then, space arises when the form is not resisted. Space, a difficult situation, an unpleasant place, whatever it may be, somebody screaming, this or that, that's what is.

And then this, it's still there, but there is a dimension of depth to what is that frees you from being totally dependent on the world of form. And from that space, you see, it comes with allowing. Allowing is the key, allow this moment and suddenly space is there because through saying yes to what is, immediately an inner spaciousness arises.

And out of that spaciousness, action can come. Out of that spaciousness, words can

come or out of that spaciousness, nothing may come. It may just remain as spaciousness, which is beautiful too.

Very effective action can come out of that. And out of that spaciousness comes the recognition that every life form that comes into your field of consciousness is really an aspect of the one life, a temporary form that the one life, the one consciousness that you are has taken. And that recognition, it's a flower, it's a tree, it's a cloud, it's another human being, it's the cat, it's a pebble, a stone, a wall, a chair, whether we call it alive or inanimate, doesn't matter, everything is alive.

And everything is a form of life. And the essence is life itself, beingness, presence. Some great artists have looked at a relatively, an ordinary landscape.

Nobody would have looked at it twice. And they looked, and then they took up the brush. And then there was a, when the painting was finished, yes, it was a picture of that landscape.

But it also had the fragrance of that which is beyond form, that was there as the backdrop, the background to the sense perception of the artist. There was a true looking against a field of alert, aware stillness. Then it became a painting.

And then even, not immediately perhaps, but at some point, even humans who had perhaps not, perhaps almost completely trapped in form, recognized something in that painting. They couldn't quite say what. And so it became what they call great art.

Somebody was able to look at the world of form so deeply that the formless became part of the perception. And that is not, this is meant to be our normal state. It is meant to bring that dimension into this world of form, that which transcends the personal, because everything that is personal about you is what pertains to the world of form.

My past, my thoughts, my opinions, my viewpoints of who I am, who others are, what I know or think I know, my story, my future. All form, and it's all destined to dissolve fairly quickly as all forms do, pop, boop, soap bubbles. Oh, where's, it's gone.

Oh, of course it can't be. They don't, the amazing thing is they don't teach yet at school that forms dissolve quickly. That could be lesson one.

And every child would see it. Oh yes, they don't teach it. They teach other things which they say are more important or important matters.

This matter has to do with the world of things. Don't look for the significant in your life at some future moment. When am I going to make it?

When am I going to be recognized? When am I finally going to get that sense of security that can only come when you have a certain amount of money in the bank? When is my

story finally turning, going to turn into a happy and satisfying one?

I'm waiting. Waiting for my life to become significant. And you miss the depth because the depth is in each moment or rather the one, the only moment there is.

And your life becomes very significant when you bring the inner yes to the present moment. Then something arises in you that is beyond the form that perhaps looks as if it were an obstacle, but it is. The truth of this was expressed, is expressed in mythologically in the image of the cross.

Somebody surrenders to the most dreadful situation, pain, suffering, and somebody surrenders to that. So at first, the cross is the greatest obstacle to finding yourself, to being yourself, to life. It seems to deny that there's any meaning to life.

Now the cross stands for anything, loss, death, and it'll come into everybody's life, of course. And then there comes this, well, this is the form, this moment. And suddenly there's a peace in the background that suddenly is there in the most dreadful situation externally.

And so the cross becomes suddenly an opening that works with little things and suddenly works with big things. The actor who played Superman died yesterday. He experienced a dreadful accident, broke his neck, couldn't move anymore.

He also experienced a certain degree of surrender in the years after that. Even a certain peace one could see. It became an opening.

And so they said something beautiful in the news. He truly became Superman only after the accident. From a conventional viewpoint, it would be an irony in the film he flies and in reality is confined to a wheelchair, but the true Superman is in the wheelchair.

He also said something, they showed an interview that was, he gave it one year ago. He talked about the accident. He said, I was one, when I was riding, I was always completely one with the horse.

We were a oneness. And he said, but at that moment, I got distracted by a thought and I lost the present moment. And then the accident happened.

And he said, you see how important the present moment is. How important, how precious the present moment is because it is life itself. It is inseparable from the very being that you are.

And knowing that is the art of living in this world. Remembering you're not what happens because people get so drawn into what happens. You're not what happens and you're not what you do because that's what life consists of.

Things happen to you, that's the passive experience of life. And then you react or you do

things that's the active. And that's for most humans, that's all there is.

They're dependent on what happens to them and on the doing what they do. So there's what happens, what's the next thing that's going to happen? I'm hoping that it will be good.

Underneath the hope, there's the fear that it'll be bad. What happens and what you do are only relatively important, not absolutely. Absolutely important is whether you are aligned with life at this moment.

That is your purpose, to live, to learn, to live in that way here on this earth as this temporary form is your purpose, to learn that. And what you do doesn't matter. The success of your life is not determined by what the world tells you is successful.

The world doesn't know it, the world is completely lost. Are you aligned with life? With being?

With yourself? With the now? So one.

And then what you do externally is secondary. How you do it is what matters. Whether you six, seven, eight hours a day, you move dishes or whatever you do, then it flows into that, being flows into that.

Or if whatever you do, it seems incompatible with being, you will find yourself very quickly removed. Life removes you. The boss calls you in and says, we don't need you anymore.

We don't want peaceful people here. Or he says, you're the only person not suffering from a stress-related disease. You're not doing your job.

Some of the structures of this mad world can perhaps be transformed from within. Other structures of this mad world, you simply leave or they collapse by themselves. And there's wisdom is required for you to know.

But that's easy because wisdom is, the place of wisdom is accessing the present moment. Alert, still, present. And you watch and you listen.

You watch and listen, even if there's nothing to listen to. As one Zen master would often call his disciples by their name, Mary, yes, master? Nothing, didn't.

John, yes? Nothing. To simply call them out of identification with the stream of thinking into presence, into stillness, into alert awareness.

He doesn't, you don't have to fill it with something. It's space itself. So he called them into that state and there was nothing, he didn't have to put anything into it.

Why fill it up? There'll be enough things that's been got, go into space. There are all kinds of things would go.

Oh, oh. But you don't have to hang on so much anymore. You can, they enter your space.

Space, not yours. You are space, so it's not your space. Things enter space and then they leave.

Okay, experiences, events, people. And you remain as space, the background. So the foreground is the world.

The foreground is the world of things, the world of thinking, the world of emotions coming, going. That's the foreground of your life that most people are completely lost in. And then there's the background.

The Buddha smile is, I would call the background smile. Wow. This was expressed in an extreme form by the teacher Krishnamurti, who once said in a talk, do you want to know my secret?

And of course, everybody wanted to know his secret. They'd been coming for 30 years to listen to him. And he said, this is it, my secret.

I don't mind what happens. I don't know how many people got it. Amazing.

And of course, we understand what that means. I don't mind what happens. I'm not what happens, and I'm not looking for myself in what happens.

I am not what happens, nor am I looking for myself in what happens. I'm the space in which it happens. Not what happens.

I'm presence, I'm consciousness. I am life. Temporarily appearing as a form of life.

So the dance of the forms of life is actually quite beautiful. When you don't mind what happens anymore, because you welcome what happens, because what happens is the present moment. And it's not serious.

Thank you. Welcome to the present moment. Here, now, the only moment there is ever.

And welcome to our little experiment. This is how I consider it. Of bringing the truth of presence, the truth of spiritual transformation, the transformation of consciousness to you through this strange medium that we call the internet, through this new technology.

It's a little ironic that a person like myself is using this technology, of course, with the help of many people. The person who is totally computer illiterate and doesn't even use email. And yet, here I am and here you are in this moment together.

The information that I'm going to give you may be of some importance. The information that will be part of our sessions. And yet, that is not the main thing.

That is not the essence of our coming together here. The essence of our coming together here is entering the state of consciousness that we may call presence. And my main endeavor is to allow you to enter that state of consciousness with me.

Here and now. There's no need to wait for the next moment or some other bit of information before you can become present, alert, still. And aware in the present moment now.

So a transformation of consciousness, a transformation of consciousness is possible. And a transformation of consciousness is already happening to many, many people around the world at this moment. How do I know this?

I know this because you are here listening, watching, sensing the power of presence within yourself. Not in me. I'm just an image on the screen.

I could say a mirror reflecting back to you who you are. So if you can sense a certain shift inside you at this moment, sensing an increased sense of aliveness, of alert stillness, then the transformation of human consciousness is already beginning to happen here and now. And it's happening here and now in the only place where it can happen.

It's in yourself. There's a certain urgency behind what we're doing here because we're at a critical time in the history of humanity. We've lived in the particular state of consciousness for thousands of years.

And that state of consciousness, or rather unconsciousness, is no longer working. It's becoming increasingly destructive. Just read the history of the 20th century and see how destructive that state of consciousness, that collective state of consciousness has become.

And if there's no shift in consciousness at this time, then humanity may very well self-destruct. So the question for us as a species is ultimately evolve or die. So there's an enormous power now, an evolutionary impulse pushing us into this new state of consciousness.

And this is the reason why I am here talking to you and this is the reason why you are here listening to these words. It goes far beyond the personal dimension. There's a deeper reason of why we're here.

It's an expression of an evolutionary impulse in the collective consciousness of humanity. It wants to evolve. It wants to reach a new evolutionary stage of consciousness.

And so I can feel in what I do, whether it's writing or speaking, I can feel the power of that evolutionary impulse behind the words and the power that comes even when there are no words. There's just a still, alert presence. There's still an enormous power that comes through when one sits there in simply the state of alert presence.

And that's the power of consciousness itself. And that is working through this form, this body, and it's working through you also. It is the same power.

Something in the collective wants that change. And all we need to do is be open to this evolutionary impulse so that we can cooperate with it rather than try to protect ourselves and our egos from it. And part of this teaching here is to show you this possibility of opening yourself up more and more to what wants to happen on this planet.

Not what I want to make happen or you want to make happen, but something far greater than the individual person. But it can only happen through the individual person. So I welcome you because you are part of this process and we are going to be here together regularly so that we can enter more deeply into that state and so that you can begin to live from that state of consciousness in your daily life, which is the main thing.

It's your daily life that determines where you are at as far as your state of consciousness is concerned. Not just it's fine to be here at this moment and become present, that's beautiful and necessary, but it's as essential to hold that state of presence in everyday life. And to learn that is why we are here.

So the dance continues, phenomenal existence, nothing stays in place for that long. And that is beautiful too, the continuous change, the continuous ending and beginning and ending and beginning experiences without looking for yourself in all that, in the dance of phenomenal existence, then it gets difficult. And the essence of our weekend retreat really is the essence of existence.

And that's by knowing yourself as the awareness in which phenomenal existence happens, become free of dependency on phenomena and free of self-seeking in situations, places, conditions, looking for a deeper me, a bigger me in phenomena, fearing change because I may lose something that I thought was part of me. Then phenomenal existence, people may pretend that they're having fun, but they're not really. It's a continuously enticing thing and also a threatening thing to be in phenomenal existence and not knowing yourself or only knowing yourself as a phenomenon in the head.

So the freedom is simply knowing yourself as the aware space and then let it happen. And you even participate in it. You're not just a passive spectator, although that element is always there even as you act upon, as this form acts upon the world and participates in the dance, you're not just watching the dance of other life forms.

You're also, there is a form, temporary form here that participates in the dance also. So you dance along, but you watch that also. You watch yourself dancing the dance of phenomenal existence.

And that's fine. Now the wonderful thing that happens when you know yourself as the awareness, you no longer demand that phenomenal existence should make you happy because everybody otherwise is demanding that. You don't know yourself.

You demand something from the world. The world owes me. It should make me happy.

I've given so much. It's what has the world given me? And of course the world won't do that.

Phenomenal phenomena are not designed to make people happy. To give the appearance of happiness for moments, yes. And then the tendency is to turn to either end or to turn into their opposite.

That's in the nature of phenomena. They quickly come to an end or if they continue, their satisfying nature is no longer satisfying. And it's an amazing thing when the demand is dropped that the world should make you happy.

And what does the world? The world means phenomena. The world means a place should make you happy.

I found the place, the ideal place to live. I'm really going to be happy there. People, this one, I found the one who is going to make me happy conditions, situations, anything phenomenal, expecting for ultimate fulfillment.

It cannot live up to that. The world cannot live up to that. And expecting to complete yourself, to find a sense of completion in phenomena also.

It cannot, the world cannot give you that sense of completion and fulfillment. So in the absence of knowing yourself, no space consciousness, as we could call it, presence, awareness, of awareness, self-aware, then it's a struggle. And ultimately it's frustration.

And you no longer demand that the world should make you happy. Phenomena, experiences, the reactive relationship towards experiences goes. Reactive, personalized relationship towards everything that happens around you.

You may even get angry or, about the weather not being as it should be. Tiny, it's a tiny thing, but it's just one of many things that people are reactive about. And then you may seek the ideal climate.

And when you finally get there, something else happens to spoil the whole thing. There's always something that comes in, in any condition, place, or situation, an element sooner or later comes in that is, a little thing that seems to spoil it. Something wants to come in

it to detract from the, that was so nice for a moment.

And then a flaw comes in, and that is in the nature of phenomena. The little thing comes in, it's not quite working as it should. That wasn't in the plan.

And when you see it, it's never quite perfect, the phenomenal world. It's not, it's never, as long as you expect it to be perfect, just right, it's not. When you give up, the demand or the expectation that a situation, a person or a relationship should make you happy, should display perfection, should give you, a sense of self, then it won't.

If you drop the demand, then the strange thing is, it is quite a perfect place. You don't need it to be perfect anymore. The imperfection inherent in all phenomena, which means they come to an end, they continuously change, is actually part of the dance, and quite beautiful too.

That's expressed in Zen. A Zen master was sweeping the floor, and he knocked over with a broom, with a handle behind him, there was a vase on the table, and he knocked it over by mistake, and the disciple saw that. And the disciple, with a slight smile on his face, asked the master, is perfection possible in this for a human being?

And the master said, yes, the perfect human being allows imperfection to be there. So it's not really imperfection, it's the nature, accepting the nature of phenomena. But it's interesting to see, no matter what you do and where you go, something will come in, it seems there's a little element there that wants to spoil it.

It's not really. When you no longer demand anything, there's simply the acceptance of the continuously fluctuating dance, then that is fine too, that becomes part. And so now what we are really talking about is the state of aligning yourself with the is-ness of this moment, which is the dance.

Not demand that it should be different. When is the world going to make me happy? Nothing can make you happy for long.

But when you know yourself there's an abiding, alive sense of peace, we could call it joy, that's because there's such aliveness there. Peace coupled with aliveness really is joy. Joy is an alive sense of peace.

That is the joy of being, of being who you are. And it is there continuously as the undercurrent. It's the joy of knowing yourself as the very life essence before phenomena, the very awareness.

That knowledge is joy. And you then enjoy both the birth and the death of phenomena. Which happens continuously.

The end of this retreat is a kind of death of a particular experience. And you enjoy that.

But if you only have this experience, you might get sad about leaving this place because the experience comes to an end.

And then you project yourself, oh, in two days I'll be there, back. And you miss the here. So there's that which doesn't end, being, the awareness, and knowing yourself as that.

And then things happen. And you participate. And in the back, in the background, there's a witnessing presence.

And you watch yourself talking and doing it. Sometimes you watch emotions. The Buddha saw all that already.

He said, no matter where you go or what you do, whatever condition you find, whatever situation you find yourself in, he said, it will have three characteristics. Any situation, any condition. And they are expressed in the Pali language, which is a kind of similar to Sanskrit.

Anicca, anatta, and dukkha. I don't use foreign words very often, but. It's nice to see the truth expressed everywhere.

Anicca means impermanent, it passes. Any condition, wherever you go, it has the characteristic of impermanency. Anicca means impermanent, passing, fleeting.

And the strange thing is, even yesterday, it's gone. Last week is gone. Your childhood is gone.

Not very different from a dream. Because the forms are there for a while, and then they dissolve like mist or vapor. Was it all a dream?

And sometimes it happens even to people, they look back on something, just was that a dream or did it happen? It may even be to you when you're traveling back to your usual where you live, and you suddenly there's the Hollyhock experience recedes. And then suddenly you're back in your old familiar surroundings.

Okay, was that a dream, the whole Hollyhock thing? No, it was real, but it's gone just as if it were a dream. It's...

And so this is all sensory experience has that nature of anicca. And it evaporates, and it's amazing. And it's a fearful thing when you have to hang on to these things because you're looking for yourself in it somewhere.

Oh, it's coming to an end again. Or a relationship can be devastating, a relationship coming to an end again. As a friend of mine once told me when she had a relationship, and it came to an end, and she said goodbye to him on the train, the relationship, of course, and finished.

And she said, God, this time you've gone too far. And that is another that people have that they have an issue with God. You should talk, you shouldn't, you should know better.

Phenomena shouldn't come to an end. Why did you arrange things in that way? Everything should last forever and be completely static.

So that's the truth of impermanence. And if you expect the impermanent to be permanent, that is the other characteristic of all phenomena, of all situations, conditions that the Buddha called dukkha, suffering. If you expect the impermanent to be permanent, it's a suffering, dukkha, dukkha.

And the element of suffering then is the unsatisfactoriness that comes in because of the transient nature of phenomena. Dukkha can also be translated as plain misery, unsatisfactoriness, suffering. And the third characteristic, and again, we've already been talking about it, anatta, every situation, every condition, not self, it is not self.

And if you're seeking yourself in it, again, you're back in dukkha, suffering. Anatta, not self. Whatever situation you're in, if there's self-seeking, an enhanced seeking, an enhanced sense of me through identification with this or that, you're back in suffering.

So every condition, every situation has those characteristics. There's no self in it, it is impermanent. And if you don't know it, it's suffering.

And once this is the truth uttered, he may have been the first human being who saw the truth 2,600 years ago. Wow. And that simplicity then over the centuries became a huge religion.

And you have to study years to get it. It is possible that he also taught body awareness. Some people say he did, it doesn't matter.

Vipassana is a body awareness meditation in Buddhism to feel, be in the body. So Jesus recognized it, the impermanence. That is the realm, the dimension where moth and rust consume and thieves break in and steal.

He said that he described the dimension of phenomena. They are moth and rust. Now rust does, it consumes even the hardest of form, metal.

Moth, they are these little things that eat garments. So it's a nice visual image of impermanence of form. So if you put your attention on form and seek forms, then it crumbles.

You can see the crumbling and thieves break in and steal. Forms get taken away by thieves or by life, by God, who shouldn't have. It would be amazing if you could see the world of form, speed it up.

As you see in some films, when they speed up the film and you see our flower, there's the bud of a flower and then it opens. First it comes out of the ground. But flower opens.

And then it withers. And it's gone. And if you saw a human being, you would see something similar.

And the human form withers just like an apple. That is, there's an apple and then it's fresh at first. And then it gets wrinkled.

Now, another amazing thing, if you saw, I looked at flowers, a flower bed, and I saw how these forms, how they come out of the ground and go. The flowers come, open up and go. And then the next ones come.

So it's a continuous back into nothingness. And really the same flower is coming up again. Into existence, out of existence, into existence, out of existence.

And humans, I see, I was driving, I don't even remember what city it was, back from the city to the airport. And the city is full of people running around. And on the way to the airport, there was a huge cemetery.

And a few years ago, they were all running around the city. And it was so important. I also love to look at old photographs that you can buy in antique junk shops or where people, they found photographs in their attic or somewhere and can't even remember who they were.

And so they end up in a shop and you see all these people, long gone, not much is remembered. And they were trapped in their world of problems that were so important. And how quickly forms dissolve.

Look at a city scene in a photograph, hundreds of people cheering a political leader or something. And everybody's gone. The political leader and the cheering people evaporated.

And it was so important, total. And here we come to the relative importance of all things in phenomena. I'm not saying pay no attention anymore to the world of phenomena.

No, honor it, but know that whatever is here in the world is relatively important, but not absolutely important. The only thing of absolute importance is knowing who you are beyond phenomenal existence. Jesus said that you're concerned about many things, but really only one thing matters.

He said to Martha, only one thing matters, ultimately matters. So to honor the phenomenal world, but not believing that it is so serious. It's not that serious, not that heavy.

So, and there's something very strange when you contemplate the impermanence of

everything and just see it. Don't even need to think about it or formulate a theory or to just see the impermanence of all forms. And when you stay with that, that is one way of knowing yourself beyond form, because that which sees the impermanence is the awareness.

And that's in Buddhism, sometimes they have the practice of contemplating dead bodies. The monks go and look at dead bodies in the morgue and sit there for two or three hours or a whole day. That's maybe taking it to an extreme.

And besides, in the Western world, they wouldn't even allow you to do that. They think you must be, one thing, we must be weird if you want to see a dead body, it's not allowed. You have to get special permission and you probably wouldn't get it.

Yeah. So to see the impermanence, whether in the human form or any other form, you might think that must be depressing. But if you stay simply with the seeing of it without coming to any conclusion, you don't need to draw any mental conclusion that, oh, this is dreadful, this is whatever.

Or even a theory, of course, even to take refuge in a mental theory that, yeah, but reincarnation, we reincarnate one, reincarnate into the next. We leave that aside towards something more essential. Reincarnation doesn't help you if in your next reincarnation, you still don't know who you are.

Simply to see the impermanence, the seeing is freeing, the seeing of it, because that is the awareness. So there is something very strangely peaceful about seeing the impermanence of all forms. And that is because the awareness sees that.

If, and that is the one thing or no thing that is not subject to birth and death. It is the universal awareness going through this form, moving through this form. But it is the universal consciousness, the one not subject to birth and death.

It sees. And that is why I mentioned that also, at some point, there is something sacred about the fact of death, the disappearing forms, because whenever the form disappears momentarily, something shines through at that moment of transition of disappearance from form into no form, the formless shines through. And that's the joy of being here also.

Because it is a kind of psychological death that you voluntarily embrace here. Who you thought you were, dies. Not that the form disappears.

But the belief that this, the me, this is me, that me goes. Your sense of who you are dies. And that's beautiful.

And there's a, suddenly, suddenly, you see how you had limited yourself in an absurd way to a little me and my problems. So one could say it is simply a shift from believing

that I am this, or I'm that, and I want to be that, to simply go deeper. I am.

To know yourself as the I am presence, which is awareness. Twice in the Bible that occurs, and those are the most profound statement in the Old Testament, when they ask about God, who are you? What's your name?

And God, the one consciousness, speaking, of course, through a human, somebody wrote that. I am that I am. I am that I am.

That's what God says about him, her, itself. I am that I am. The I am, that's the I am.

The innermost identity of each form. So that everybody senses there's something incredibly precious in me that I don't want to lose when I die. And they mix that up with form in the head, my story, my life, my identity, that feels so precious.

So that gets mixed up with objects in consciousness, not realizing that that preciousness that you sense, if only in an obscure way, those people who haven't realized who they are in the background, they said preciousness, but they believe it's to do with the object in consciousness, the forms, not knowing that this preciousness is their own essence, which is consciousness itself. And this, they don't want to lose. And it's the only thing they can't lose.

So the innermost identity, something remained. You were a child, then you grew up, and perhaps your life changed dramatically, almost as if you had gone through different incarnations in one lifetime. It happens to some people.

Other people remain in one incarnation. They stay in the same place, perhaps into the same job a whole lifetime. Who knows, that could be how they realize through sheer boredom, finally.

But many people move through, their form goes, seems to change so dramatically. Suddenly, your form is so different in relation to the world. Even with me, this form, it happened.

This form was a hermit for years. Nobody paid much attention, except a few people here and there, to what the hermit said. And basically, it was wonderful being nobody, beautiful.

And then suddenly, the nobody becomes somebody in the eyes of the world, like a new incarnation. And nothing has changed in the innermost, absolutely nothing. But externally, it looks, oh, there's a new incarnation now.

But if you look deep underneath the events and the phenomena, the innermost, the essence of your being is the same. Deep down, the sense of I-ness underneath the changing phenomena around you is the same. And that is the I-am.

That is the awareness, the consciousness. People don't know that. They sometimes get a glimpses of that, and then it gets mixed up again with the objects that arise in consciousness.

So knowing yourself, not as arising objects in consciousness, as phenomenal experience or thoughts, but that which makes all that possible. This is expressed so beautifully in a very ancient scripture, in one of the Upanishads, some of which are even earlier than the Bhagavad Gita, very ancient Indian scripture, talking about the nature of God or the ultimate or the eternal or the one. And that's what it says is this.

I only remember a few lines, not the whole of it. Not that which the eye sees, but that whereby the eye can see. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore.

Not that which the ear hears, but that whereby the ear can hear. Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, not what people here adore. Not that which the mind thinks, but that whereby the mind can think.

Know that alone to be Brahman, the eternal, and not what people here adore. That the one, the underlying consciousness that makes thought possible, thought comes out of it, that makes sense perception possible, the very ground, that not what people here adore. What people here adore is mental images of God, or they make God some external object that they believe will give them salvation, and then they make that into God.

Not what people here adore. That's beautiful. That's the essence.

So I'd like to listen to one more song before we go on to exchanging hugs, if we haven't done that yet. And just listen, the song is again by Kirtana, and it is called, appropriately, I Am.

[Speaker 2] (5:21:16 - 5:25:26)

Before the body, before the story, before the name, beyond the mind's attempt to find or explain, before the breath, beyond the sense of pleasure or of pain, and after death, and after death, I am. Within the heart, the whole and part of everything I see, behind the eyes, beyond the skies, reflecting me, at the silent core, and yet before horror phenomena begin, oh, and after it, and after it, I am. Many differences separate us on the surface, yes, but I cannot find a boundary in consciousness.

When you ask me where does awareness begin and does it end, I have to say I've always been within the body, without the body, not subject to changing moods, states of health, points of view, without needs, before the deeds and the monuments of man, oh, and after that, and after that, I am. Many differences separate us on the surface, but I cannot find a boundary in consciousness. Oh, and when you ask me where does awareness begin and does it end, I have to say I've always been at the silent core, and yet before

horror phenomena begins, oh, and after it, and after it, I am.

[Speaker 1] (5:27:14 - 5:42:43)

No more words are coming, so no more words are needed. Thank you. To see that before long some form of limitation will recur in your life in the now and you surrender to that.

You can change the situation but knowing the limitless is not to be encountered in the world of form because form means limitation. So, you say yes to the now even if it is a form of limitation seemingly. You surrender to that and suddenly around to the seeming limitation there is spaciousness at certain depths.

What really is arising here, although we need to be careful with words, all forms, thought forms, physical forms are conditioned. It's the conditioning. Conditioned consciousness, consciousness appearing as a form.

Consciousness appearing as a thought form. Consciousness appearing in many, many forms. But there is the appearance arises out of a vast realm of the unconditioned consciousness before it takes form and that is within every human being that dimension is there one could say underneath the conditioned.

Which is all thought forms and emotional forms is the depths of the unconditioned which could be can be felt cannot be known as such as you know an object in consciousness. People look for God or themselves believing that at some point in the future of course they are going to find God or themselves as an object in consciousness as a knowledge in a subject-object relationship as if they could know it in the way that you can know a tree but you can't because the unconditioned is not an object it is the ground out of which all mind subject-objects objects in consciousness arise into which they subside so you can never know yourself in the normal sense of the word but you can be that and that is felt one could say it is a realm of stillness underneath the mental noise and every word will reduce it it is far more than that every word is no more than a little pointer a realm of aware presence that is beyond thought thought can happen come out of it but in itself it is consciousness one could say without thought unconditioned that is the deepest meaning of now because the strange thing about now is that it never leaves you and it doesn't change the field of now because it is the essence of now is it is the unconditioned consciousness the field in which all phenomena happen and this and now the beauty here is to know that one could say you know the now beyond the form it takes but you don't know it in a subject-object relationship you know this field of now when you surrender to the form, you know that which is beyond form surrender to the form the limitation and then that emerges that is beyond form and beyond limitation as yourself and this goes against how everybody lives in this world they do not surrender to the limitation of this form, they think they want to get away from it surrender to the form of now takes you into the depths of the now itself which you then know as the essence of your being but not don't know anything about it a direct unitive knowing as yourself I

would go so far as to say that you are the now totally one with it it never leaves you you can't leave yourself the essence, the unconditioned dimension of who you are and when you know that you can allow the conditioned and the form to be and it's beautiful the form as which you appear because you don't need it anymore to derive a sense of self from it then the forms are beautiful also you honor them really for the first time when you know yourself to be beyond the form you honor all the forms completely also so to surrender to the limitation the seeming limitation this is the essential truth the ultimate truth of all religions is the surrendered state of consciousness, there is even one religion that's called surrender, Islam but it is the essence of all religion in Christianity that essence is contained in the image of the cross Jesus on the cross is all of humanity the cross is the ultimate symbol of extreme limitation couldn't be more limited than to be nailed to a cross it's a torture instrument so in a way, for a while humans experience the world which is the world of form almost as a torture it's so heavy and then that can take a time until suddenly they can hear the message of surrender and then at that moment as symbolized by that image of Jesus surrender happens on the cross total surrender to extreme limitation and the seemingly unacceptable not my will but thy will be done thy will is the will of the one and then my and thy merge in the act of surrender there is no longer my that opposes thy when my and thy merge there is total surrender your will is one with the totality and at that moment the cross becomes a symbol for the divine the very limitation turns into the symbol for God or the divine so it's not by resisting or running away from but by that deep act of surrender that the divine is realized and that amazingly does not take time surrender can only be now it may take time to dwell in the surrendered state as your permanent state you fall back into resistance because the momentum of the collective conditioning is so strong and then you re-enter surrender but the moment of surrender is always now because you surrender to the now and in the now so it can only be now so that one decisive act or spiritual practice is the one that doesn't take time and that's the beauty of it it really means you don't need future to find yourself and you need to add nothing to you to find yourself nothing then you can play with the realm of phenomena and add things it's beautiful, it's a play but you no longer need it for yourself it's the essence of spiritual realization all the teachings point to it that is to see that what grace to see that the very thing that looked so heavy which is the world of form the very thing that seemed to be limiting me on all sides that very thing is the doorway into the formless and into who I am beyond form and you see that ultimately they are one form is emptiness emptiness is form they are one and that is the message of eternal salvation the most sublime message for humankind nothing else is needed but that

[Speaker 4] (5:42:53 - 5:42:54)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:43:06 - 5:51:20)

the hardest word that I'm having trouble with right now is responsibility and I have a hunch that most of the things I consider responsibility are just my ego telling me things I have to do but I also when I think about the future of the earth and human evolution and stuff like that sometimes I have big emotions of responsibility so I'm just curious about the right relationship to the word responsibility thank you it's a strange word it has been pointed out that if you look at the word it seems to be talking about the ability to respond to respond so to take responsibility for what is it that you can take responsibility for primarily it's taking responsibility for your state of consciousness which determines what kind of world you create because you are humanity humanity is an abstract conceptual concept doesn't exist humanity is the human being you are humanity so for humanity to take responsibility you need to take primarily responsibility for your state of consciousness because only a diseased or dysfunctional state of consciousness produces a diseased and dysfunctional world out there by world I mean the human made world that has been imposed on the what's already there, the planet which is potentially of course a paradise the planet pristine unbelievable jewel the being of great intelligence we are not separate from it but the being is going through a transitional process and every transitional process is critical it may or may not work in which case the being will go some other way but the your state of consciousness determines what kind of world you create what kind of action you take and what consequences your actions have so here this is why my main work is to address the cause of dysfunction which lies in the human mind the dysfunction of the human mind or as it is sometimes called in Zen the sickness of the human mind so as I see it and I don't think anybody who reads history can doubt it there is a deep seated dysfunction in humans has been there for thousands of years and if we if there is no shift in that then the dysfunction will destroy us it probably won't destroy the planet because the planet has enormous resources but it will take a while it will take a while for the planet to recover all you have to do then is primarily take responsibility for your state of consciousness now now and this is what the entire teaching really is about what is my state of consciousness at this moment am I generating disturbance am I generating negativity am I generating conflict and suffering for myself and others am I generating inner pollution am I polluting my beautiful being that I am with continuous absurd movements of thought producing negative emotions, producing an entire entity that is illusory that I call the me so to take responsibility it needs to be just of course an awakening where you can say ok I will take responsibility now some people don't know that there is even the possibility of taking responsibility that's why you are so important anybody who realizes it this is you are the beginning of the transformed world I don't know who first coined the famous phrase you hear it quite often these days you need to be the change the change that you want to see out there you need to embody that and that's not primarily what you do there is something more primary than what you do, it's who you are who you are is your state of consciousness, whatever you do flows out of that so that's primary is that the change is the transformed state of consciousness now that is your responsibility anybody, once you've seen that that's your responsibility now you know it people who are not yet at that level don't

realize it and that's fine you can't expect the whole world already to be at that stage it's enough for you to take responsibility knowing there are still a few millions others who don't know that they can take responsibility because they live in such unconsciousness that they see the entire evil in others it's all in them and they make half the world into their enemy it's all out there that's fine only those are required to take responsibility who are up to it and but even those who are totally unconscious still, on the one hand they don't know what they're doing obviously, as Jesus said on the cross they know not what they do in other words, they are in the grip of unconscious forces or unconscious mental, emotional streams they don't know what they do they cannot be held responsible and people say, well they should be held responsible, no they can't they don't know what they do, however the fact that they are not responsible because they can't be responsible does not mean that they do not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness so they generate suffering and eventually, suffering is the fire in which the ego gets burned up, the collective ego and the personal ego that's the long way the slow way the painful way and then there's a shortcut which is any spiritual teaching is just it cuts through that the painful way, the long way of waking up more and more suffering the planet might not endure such a long learning process for humanity so if the learning process of humanity does not become shortened it is doubtful that the planet can allow humanity to learn through further suffering for another 500 years or even 200 years or even 100 years so that's you are responsible for all that

[Speaker 4] (5:51:30 - 5:51:31)

thank you

[Speaker 1] (5:51:39 - 6:03:55)

that's the secret of the universe as far as humans are concerned in their present evolutionary stage the secret lies in simply no longer internally resisting denying or running away from what is at this moment whatever is at this moment to find an inner alignment with the form that this moment takes and the conceptualized egoic entity can't do that but you can do that when you see the truth of it there's the possibility of living in a state of yes to what is an inner yes the conceptualized egoic entity lives in the state of no to what is and that is the greatest transformation happens when there is the shift in you internally from denying the present moment because it's not yet enough it's not really what I wanted, this shouldn't be happening I want something else I definitely don't want this I want the next moment it's going to be much more complete but you always have only this and then a strange thing happens at first sight it seems that the form that this moment takes because that's all it is, there are not many moments in your life there's only this moment ever but the form that this moment takes changes continuously different forms come into that space of now which is that inner space forms appear in the space of now in your life a situation a person, an event a place a space and very often the form that this moment takes seems to be a limitation it seems to limit me

I want to be limitless I want to know myself as limitless many people feel that the form that this moment takes how could I accept that because this form limits me so much and this could be where you live, it could be relationships it could be your physical body you cannot not encounter limitations in the world of form you can change, you can have slightly more pleasant limitations you could be sitting in a tiny little room and saying I'm so limited here, I want to expand I want to live in a mansion and you might succeed ten years later, five years later you live in a mansion you seem to have expanded and then you sit in your mansion what now? for a while it feels great you have expanded because you have identified with the thought form of mansion you have expanded but sooner or later the mansion will limit you in other ways your new life situation will suddenly show you there are other limitations you may become famous and suddenly discover that great limitations come with fame you are free of the limitations that came with poverty and now you encounter other limitations that come with that so it's yes you can play around with different forms in your life and experiment and expand into other forms not expecting to find the limitless in the world of form and realizing in one way or another the form that this moment takes will be some form of limitation that it is in the nature of form to be limited and that's a deep realization and then the running away from the form that this moment takes the reactive relationship to the form that this moment takes isn't there anymore when you see the truth of this and are able to say yes to the form that this moment takes instead of resisting the form that this moment takes internally which keeps you trapped in your own mental form so what does that mean? it means quite simply you become friendly with what is it doesn't mean now you are condemned to non-action out of that state of yes, intelligent action arises when it's needed not when it's not needed you embrace what is even if it seems very limited or limiting because it already is you can't remove is out of existence so you become internally aligned with that so when you say yes to what is space arises so to speak around what is this is a way of speaking but that's all we can do here a sense of space or spaciousness arises around the form that this moment takes and that liberates you from the limitations of form and you cannot find the spaciousness by always running away from the forms that arise but being with them surrendering to the form that this moment takes is the key the inner surrender whatever is part of the totality the web of interconnectedness that is the universe this event is part of that there is a certain inevitability to the form that this moment takes yes, then perhaps action arises and it changes you're actually amazed how quickly the form that this moment changes and you don't resist it anymore internally because a greater intelligence comes into play now and things, miraculous things can happen even on the level of form but they didn't happen when you lived in non-alignment with is they only happen when you live in alignment with is and to some people that means yes to the most dreadful limitation and that is why traditionally people who reached that realization found the most dreadful limitation in their life and surrendered to that the archetype of that is Jesus on the cross this is the human the human archetype this is true for each human being the most unacceptable form of limitation that a human, you don't need to be a Christian to believe this or to see the

truth of it in fact if you are a Christian you may not see it because they tend to have a narrow interpretation of something that is very deep so you have somebody a human being in a situation that is a manifestation of the most extreme limitation totally and symbolically the words that came out of his mouth were at first why has thou abandoned me God, the last no no the next words that came were not my will but thy will be done which means thy will is the will of the one not to make it into a mental concept the will of the one is whatever is now not my will but thy will be done, a complete yes and at that moment the cross which is the symbol of the ultimate limitation becomes a symbol of the divine it's the dual symbolism of the cross it's a torture instrument and it's a symbol of the divine and that is whatever may be happening in your life and be the limit the greatest limitation in your life it is not only the limitation it's also the opening when it's not internally resisted the opening into space because space comes with a yes to what is you are no longer bound to what is you are no longer bound to the form you know yourself as the formless one life one consciousness ah that's the true happiness that lasts the heart of happiness the core of happiness not the superficial happiness that goes in the next moment that's so nothing needs to change for this to happen in your life this transition whatever is is the best that is for you at this moment you work with that, say yes to that don't believe the mind when it says ok I'll say yes when I get this out of the way and enormous power moves into your life the very intelligence of the universe manifests through this form which then becomes an opening and it's the end of suffering the end of the suffering entity you may still get a toothache from time to time but that is how it is too you surrender to that also surrender that's all no time is required for the shift in consciousness you can only do it now yes to now and find yourself through that

[Speaker 4] (6:03:57 - 6:04:05)

thank you